

The Baptist Record

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Meaningful, upbeat baptisms within reach, author says

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (BP) — What do you remember about your baptism — does it stick out in your mind as a special occasion or a routine ceremony?

Gerald Steffy, director of missions in Illinois and former assistant pastor of Tower Grove Church, St. Louis, has compiled several suggestions for making baptism ceremonies more meaningful in his book, **Baptismal Manual: Making Baptism More Meaningful**.

Steffy remembers his baptism but little explanation about its meaning. To help churches have more upbeat baptism services, Steffy gives 135 possibilities for making baptism more significant. He also includes personal baptismal testimonies, hints for baptism sermons, and baptismal poetry.

Some highlights of Steffy's suggestions for a more meaningful baptism are:

- Prepare a Bible study for baptismal candidates to be used prior to the candidate's baptism, answering questions such as who should be baptized and what baptism means; and a guidebook that addresses the transition from a life in sin to a new life in Christ.

- Plan a worship service to include both baptism and the Lord's Supper in the same service. Seat the newly baptized and those recently baptized in the front and serve them first.

- Plan the baptismal service so it will have the greatest witness to the unsaved. Schedule baptisms when non-Christians are most likely to be present.

- Introduce the person who led the candidate to Christ or was instrumental in the person knowing Christ.

Dave Bennett, Missouri Baptists' director of evangelism, encourages pastors to smile, make eye contact, and talk to the candidate rather than quoting, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit..." in a liturgical voice.

- Make the baptism a time of celebration. It is something to rejoice about since one who has been saved is following the

Lord in baptism. Place emphasis on the specialness of the decision. One church, for example, claps when one comes forward to make a decision or is baptized.

- Consider having occasional outside baptisms in a river, pond, or swimming pool and a "press conference" to answer questions afterward. Bennett shared one church held its baptisms every Sunday at a public beach. After the service, he would wade over to where observers gathered and talk about baptism.

"Our attendance at Sunday morning worship grew by more than 100 people in 10 weeks, mainly due to the curiosity aroused by these public baptisms," Bennett said.

- Pray with each candidate before and after the baptism.

- Have candidates share their testimonies of new faith in Christ before being baptized.

- When members of a family are baptized at the same time, have them come into the baptistry together and stay until each one is baptized.

- Bring family members into the baptistry when one member is being baptized because often the entire family is instrumental in leading that person to Christ.

- Give each baptism candidate something to remember this special day, such as a certificate from the church, a rose, or a

videotape of the service.

- Help the church realize its responsibility toward the new converts, through a charge to the church of its ongoing responsibility to encourage spiritual maturity.

- Have a sharing service where people talk about their baptism and what it meant to them. This could be done in connection with a baptism service.

Foreign board releases healthy '93 report card

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — The Foreign Mission Board's 1993 overseas report card is out — recording new highs in churches, church membership, and baptisms. (See graphic, at left; also, related story, page 12.)

Totals for newly constituted churches, mission and preaching points, and membership in Bible teaching ministries also hit record levels in 1993, according to annual statistics compiled by the office of Jim Slack, the board's church growth consultant.

The year's healthy report card — reflecting work of missionaries, their overseas Baptist partners, and more than 11,000 Southern Baptist volunteers — is a welcomed beginning for the Foreign Mission Board's new president.

"Over the years we've dealt with gains and losses, peak, and ebbs, but we've moved into a new era of steady increases," said Jerry Rankin, who was elected president last June after 23 years as a missionary and field administrator.

"This spiritual momentum means God is moving. My concern is that we be part of that. This goes back to what I've said before, that God will achieve his goals in the world. Our task is to join him and be part of his plan."

LEADING THE WAY

Bumper years in church growth

The number of overseas churches relating to Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board missionaries has doubled since 1987.



(BP) GRAPHIC By Marty Croll

RECORD YEAR — Southern Baptist missionaries and their Baptist partners overseas set records in all major outreach categories. Church growth efforts set records in 1993 for baptisms, newly constructed churches, total church membership, and overseas churches. "I believe we're seeing a spiritual momentum that cannot be deterred," said Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board President Jerry Rankin. (BP graphic by Marty Croll)

Reds lose another round

The Cincinnati Reds major league baseball organization has failed once again in its effort to ban display of "John 3:16" posters that have turned up for years in the background of major sports telecasts. U.S. District Judge Arthur Spiegel declared unconstitutional a 1993 Reds policy excluding the display of any sign in Riverfront Stadium that was not "baseball-related." Spiegel had previously struck down a 1990 Reds policy that monitored "good taste" in signs displayed at the stadium. The controversy began on Oct. 17, 1990, when Guy Aubrey of Cleveland, Tenn., was accosted by stadium security after displaying his "John 3:16" banner during the second game of the World Series between Cincinnati and the Oakland A's. After Spiegel threw out the original Reds policy forbidding such display, the organization switched to the "baseball-related" standard, which Spiegel also threw out. Since Aubrey challenged the "baseball-related" policy, the Reds have banned all noncommercial signs and banners from the stadium.

"Lot's Wife" weakening

A rock pillar known as "Lot's Wife," located on the edge of the Dead Sea Basin, has begun to tilt and may eventually topple, some experts say. Many people and groups offer up the pillar as literal fulfillment of the Old Testament description of Lot's wife's disobedience as her family fled the wicked city of Sodom before God destroyed it. Instructed by God not to look back toward the city, Lot's wife found temptation irresistible and was turned into a pillar of salt. Scientists believe the rock pillar (which is, believe it or not, in the Sodom mountain range) was created from salt pushed up long ago from the Dead Sea — not exactly an airtight refutation of the Biblical account. Because it is located in an earthquake area and prone to dissolve in heavy winter rains, the fate of "Lot's Wife" is virtually certain. Israeli Nature Reserves Director-General Dan Peri said, "It's unlikely that this pillar is the biblical one, but as long as people enjoy seeing her, what difference does it make?"

Looking Back...

10 years ago

Southern Baptist missionary William Smith of Amite County and his wife, Carolyn, narrowly escape injury when a gunshot rings out during a robbery/carjacking at their home in Londrina, Brazil.

20 years ago

Drew native Edythe Montroy is honored by the SBC Foreign Mission Board as her 25 years as a missionary in Africa come to a close upon her retirement due to a serious automobile accident in Nigeria.

50 years ago

Plans are finalized for the 12-week Soul Winning Revival across Mississippi, with evangelist Hyman Appelman preaching. "God grant that... these 12 weeks of endeavor may start a Pentecostal Conflagration," Appelman says.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Guy Henderson



Human needs

The disciples were hungry. They plucked grain and ate it. The Pharisees, ever alert to Sabbath breakers, reported it to Jesus. The hunger of the disciples did not concern them. What a lesson Jesus taught to all mankind in his answer: "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those with him; how they entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those with him, but only for the priest" (Matt. 12:3-4).

The commandment simply forbade work on the Sabbath. Now the errorless Pharisees had to define work. There were 39 basic divisions in the Law, and these were subdivided into hundreds of prohibitions ere they finished. Plucking a few grains was reaping, winnowing, and harvesting. Thus as protectors of the law, they delivered the word of Moses, or at least their interpretation of it.

Jesus also believed the law and he knew the Scriptures. He quoted from the law and the prophets. He discredited neither, but reviewed the totality of the situation: "God desires mercy and not sacrifices."

Throughout the Bible the theme of human needs takes

precedence over a mere interpretation of the law. He claimed to be Lord or Owner of the Sabbath and the Temple and touched upon his own deity. He created the Sabbath in the first place. He was not there to destroy it but to save it from the obnoxious rules of man. "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." He declared that:

- human need has priority over the house of God,
- human need has priority over sacred objects,
- human need has priority over revered leaders.

Christ insisted that man has priority over all things, secular or sacred. Do we focus on traditions, our national image, honored institutions, the "good ole days," or upon the real object of God's love?

Last month a distant church moved the "soup kitchen" from its basement to a separate location. It seems the long line of hungry people did not grace the image of their cathedral. The thought occurred to me, that to Christ this may have been the most beautiful thing in the church.

God had intended something (the Sabbath) for a blessing to mankind. Before the Pharisees

finished with it, the beautiful thing had become a burden. Jesus reclaimed the Sabbath and placed it back within the purpose of God. His revelation of deeds of necessity, worship, and mercy mirrored the way he lived. The ox could be removed from the ditch and you could heal on the Sabbath.

The Pharisees could not agree with Jesus so the obvious thing was violence: "Let's get rid of him." Jealousy, anger, and a misunderstood religion was weaving a dangerous web. "They communed with others how they may destroy him."

This mindset continues to live in this generation. If you can't get it to blend with your religion, then destroy it. When logic fails, violence often takes the stage.

Herschel Hobbs, Baptist statesman, makes an interesting observation here: "The true reason behind all this was jealousy and fear that he would destroy their own positions." The Pharisees would not pluck the grain on the Sabbath, but it was okay for them to plot the murder of Jesus.

It bothers me that we could take something so beautiful, clear, and helpful, place our own interpretation on it, and make such a heavy burden.

Guest opinion...

When clergy stray

By Michael Clingenpeel

RICHMOND, Va. (ABP) — God created human beings. Male and female, libido and spirit, God created us.

This last part, libido and spirit, the longing for flesh and the longing for God, is a source of abounding pleasure. Misused, it is a source of agonizing misery.

Nowhere is the misery greater than when professional handlers of the holy — clergy — mishandle the divine gift of sexuality.

The facts about clergy sexual misconduct are startling. According to the Baptist Sunday School Board, it is the second most common reason for firings among Southern Baptist clergy. In a survey of clergy conducted by *Leadership*, a publication owned by *Christianity Today*, almost one in four clergy admitted engaging in inappropriate sexual contact.

No denomination, no large or well-located church, no position on the theological spectrum is exempt from the problem.

Some readers may prefer we stick to more spiritual topics. But we do a disservice to our readers

and our churches if we ignore this reality. When an ordained minister engages in sexual indiscretion, everyone suffers — the minister, minister's spouse and family, congregation, community, and denomination.

The accumulated wisdom of pastoral counselors is that clergy sexual affairs are less sexual than emotional, and less intentional than accidental. They are the result of a dysfunctional marriage, discouragement or depression stemming from job dissatisfaction, an unfulfilled desire for emotional intimacy, a need for escape from professional demands, or a combination of several of these.

But this is no excuse for exploiting for personal gratification the power and privilege of a pastoral relationship. Evidence shows that most ministers who succumb to sexual temptation, while not seeking an extramarital affair, at least give it permission to happen. Such permission never should be given.

It is my observation that some ministers in local churches, by not

caring for themselves, create the conditions under which sexual misconduct can develop. They eat too much of the wrong foods, exercise too infrequently, spend little time nurturing their spirits through prayer and introspection, shield themselves from peer and colleague relationships, give their best selves to their church family and bring their worst selves home, and are driven by their perceptions of people's expectations rather than their sense of the congregation's needs or God's purposes. Little wonder they feel empty, powerless, and long for affirmation.

But congregations unwittingly may contribute to their minister's imbalance on this dangerously slippery surface.

Some congregations do not care for their pastors very well. They underestimate the emotional stretch and squeeze their pastors feel when weeping with people's agonies and laughing with their victories. They measure pastoral success with budgets, bucks, and bricks, but accept too little respon-



THE FRAGMENTS

Fresh encounter

When was the last time you felt the stirring of revival in your heart? Have you ever been in a real spiritual awakening?

Pockets of revival have been evident from time to time, but Henry Blackaby, SBC revival specialist, says there has not been a real spiritual revival in America since 1857-58.

Church attendance or worship cannot bring revival. God requires repentance. Revival is God's restoring spiritual health and vitality to his people.

Blackaby and Claude King have written a book, *Fresh*

Encounter (also available on video or audio cassettes), which spells out God's pattern for revival. It can be used individually, in small groups, or in a congregation. If implemented, the principles in this book will create new interest in praying for a spiritual awakening.

It is not merely replacing a spark plug in a burned out motor, it is a major overhaul and engine replacement.

All of us would profit greatly by this prayer emphasis for the things that really matter.

— GH

sibility for these tangible measures. They equate emotional support with a kind word at the door after the Sunday service as they dash for the parking lot.

Many pay their pastors on a scale that doesn't match their education, experience, and responsibility. They equate activity with work, and study and reflection with idleness. Under such conditions the pastor functions as a headless chicken, flitting around in activity but without real life.

Ministers must assume responsibility for their behavior, happiness, and fulfillment. No congregation can supply its pastor with an inner moral compass that unerringly points to private

righteousness.

But church members can institutionalize ways to monitor their pastor's sense of well-being and professional growth. They can insist that a minister has enough personal time from parishioners' demands to maintain self and family. They can give the pastor freedom to express needs for friends, space, time, and encouragement. And they can help the pastor find counseling or support, at congregational expense, if necessary.

Pastors and congregations should talk with each other about this. The best time to deal with it is before it happens.

Clingenpeel is editor, *Virginia RELIGIOUS HERALD*.

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Editor.....Guy Henderson
Associate Editor.....William H. Perkins Jr.
Advertising/News writer.....Teresa Dickens
Editorial Associate.....Florence Larrimore
Circulation Manager.....Renee Walley
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Mississippi teen killed

Honduran mission trip cut short by tragic mishap

By William H. Perkins Jr.

A volunteer medical mission trip by a multi-state band of Baptists ended tragically Jan. 18 along an unpaved Honduran roadway when a vehicle accident claimed the life of Bradley Paul Boatner, 17, of Brandon, and seriously injured 23 others, including 17 Mississippians.

Mississippi Governor Kirk Fordice immediately dispatched a state Air National Guard C-141 "Starlifter" aircraft from Jackson International Airport to ferry the group home. They arrived at the airport around 3:45 a.m. on Jan. 20.

Paul Harrell, director of the Brotherhood Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, said Baptist sources in

Honduras told him that many of the 37 team members were riding on the back of a flat-bed truck at about 7:30 p.m. (CST), en route to their accommodations in Tela after a day's work in the countryside.

The truck was being driven by an unidentified Honduran, who apparently moved onto the shoulder of the single-lane road to allow an oncoming vehicle to pass. The waterlogged shoulder collapsed, sending the truck and its passengers tumbling down an embankment, Harrell said.

Boatner was pinned underneath the truck, which also rolled over many of the others. Several of the injured were treated and released from a Tela hospital, but four Mis-

issippians who sustained the most serious injuries were airlifted to a private hospital in San Pedro Sula where U.S.-trained surgeons were standing by, Harrell said.

Harrell identified those still hospitalized as:

— Anthony Presley, dentist and member of First Church, Florence: back injury, lacerated scalp, and broken ribs. Mississippi Baptist Medical Center (MBMC) in Jackson.

— David "Jeep" Sneed, dentist and member of First Church, Eupora: broken jaw and broken right arm. MBMC.

— Anne Sneed, dental assistant and wife of David Sneed: broken ribs. MBMC.

— Danny Clifton, optometrist and member of West End Church, Louisville: ruptured spleen, broken ribs, and concussion. Intensive Care Unit at River Oaks Hospital (ROH) in Flowood, outside Jackson.

— Doug Phillips, pastor of Blackwater Church, Daleville

(Kemper Association): ruptured spleen, broken ribs. ROH.

Harrell said the mission trip, put together by Pearl River Association, was an independent venture not under the coordination of the Brotherhood Department or the SBC Foreign Mission Board. (See related items, page 5)

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

The Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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State disaster relief team, truck head to quake area

By William H. Perkins Jr.

Mississippi Baptist volunteers and equipment arrived Jan. 23 in earthquake-stricken Los Angeles to help feed tens of thousands of Californians left homeless and hungry by the massive temblor that rocked the area on Jan. 17.

"Surveys indicate damage much more widespread than early estimates. Over 11,000 homes are too damaged to live in, and many more people who could return to their homes are afraid to do so because of aftershocks," said Jim Didlake, consultant in the Mississippi Brotherhood Department and on-site coordinator of disaster relief for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

Didlake has been in Los Angeles since Jan. 19, serving as an assistant field director to help California Brotherhood officials coordinate their relief effort.

"It's an awful mess. People are living in tents in public parks," he said.

Southern Baptists were initially represented by two California feeding units and one Texas unit, but the conclusion was soon reached that many more daily meals were needed.

"The Mississippi Baptist unit was activated, along with units from Missouri and Oklahoma," Didlake reported. The Mississippi

unit was last activated for a Vicksburg flash flood in July of 1993, he added.

Volunteers took turns driving Mississippi's 18-wheel rolling kitchen on a 37-hour, non-stop voyage to Los Angeles and arrived at Van Nuys airport northwest of Beverly Hills at 4 a.m. (CST) on Jan. 24.

inclement weather.

"We haven't felt any aftershocks since we got here, but some of the folks who were here Sunday night (Jan. 23) said they felt a pretty severe aftershock," he said.

Didlake returned to Mississippi on Jan. 24 to begin forming teams of volunteers to work in California over the next several weeks.

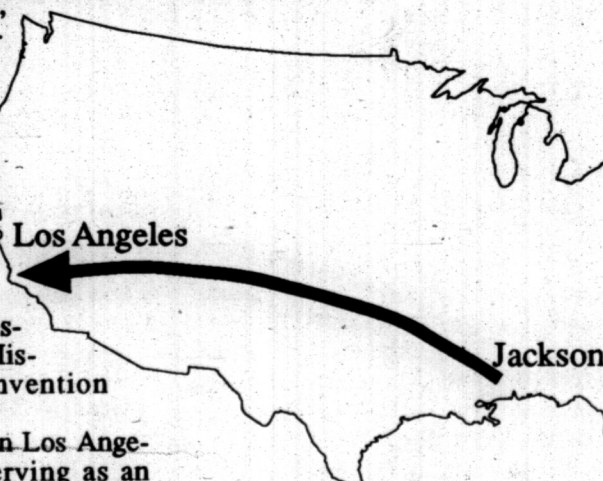
"We have a goal of 10,000 hot meals daily at the Mississippi unit, and Southern Baptists are working toward a goal of supplying all the hot meals the Red Cross needs on a daily basis — about 75,000 — for a least three to four weeks," he estimated.

Mississippi Baptist disaster relief volunteers should be on alert and prepared to leave for California on notice of two days or less, Didlake said.

"We will rotate crews out of California and back to Mississippi on a weekly basis. I'm in the process now of matching our experienced workers with newer volunteers so that each team will be balanced," he explained.

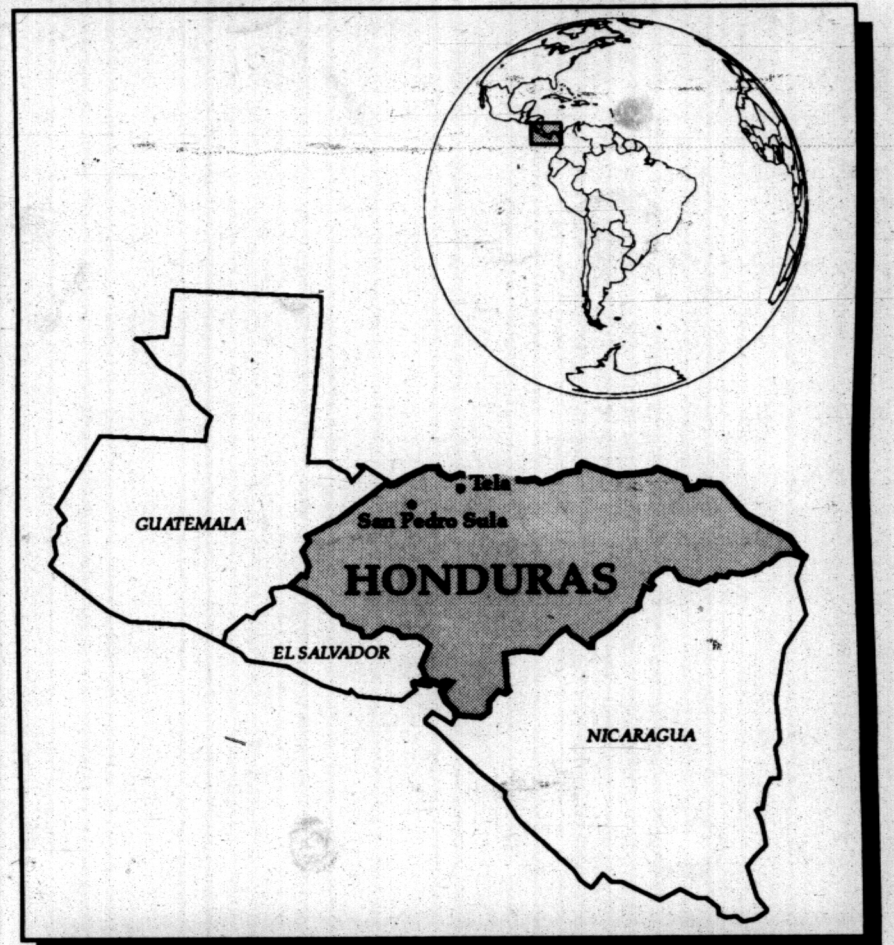
Didlake said financial contributions are at present the most important means of helping the disaster relief effort. To make a contribution or volunteer for California service, contact the Mississippi Brotherhood Department at (601) 968-3800.

(See related items, page 4)



"We began setting up the unit at daybreak and have been cooking since then. We are excited and looking forward to our service out here," said Steve Griffin, pastor of Bogue Chitto Church in Tylertown and one of the volunteers who drove the tractor-trailer to California.

Griffin said the area experienced heavy rains on the night of Jan. 24 and early morning of Jan. 25, but the feeding units are set up on concrete at the airport and haven't been affected by the



Overflow crowd mourns, celebrates teenager's life

By William H. Perkins Jr.

Brad Boatner was a spiritual giant who accomplished more for his Savior in 17 years than do many people in a lifetime, his pastor said Jan. 21 at the memorial service for the Brandon teenager killed just a few days earlier on a mission trip to Honduras.

Bobby Williamson, pastor of Park Place Church, Brandon, struggled for composure as he told of his love for Boatner, who died when the soft shoulder of a rural Honduran road gave way under the weight of the flat-bed truck on which he was riding.

"My seven-year-old son said, 'Daddy, Brad didn't even get to be a man.' I said, 'Yes, he did. He's more of a man than most of us will ever be,'" Williamson said, his voice wavering with emotion.

Sorrowful wails of classmates and friends in the overflow crowd at the church could be heard as Williamson sought to comfort those seized by grief.

"Our mistake is that we look at

death as defeat. Brad has found victory in death, and he will change more lives than if he had lived 100 years," Williamson said.

"Brad would want you to have a burden for lost souls; he'd say, 'Be a witness.' He would want you to be who God made you, and he would want you to move on. He would want you to get the biggest group you can and go to Honduras next year," Williamson pointed out.

William Carey College student John Blackwell, a Park Place member and one of Brad's close friends, noted before he sang at the service that Mississippi Governor Kirk Fordice had honored Brad's life by proclaiming Jan. 21 as "Bradley Paul Boatner Day" across the state.

"One thing (Brad) would proclaim to you today is, 'Get saved,'" Blackwell said. After he sang, Blackwell left the raised podium at the front of the church and embraced Brad's parents sitting in the front row.

Rick Swing, Park Place's minister to students, quoted Paul's admonition in 1 Corinthians 9:22, to become all things to all people so that some may be saved.

(See BOATNER on page 8)



Boatner



Mississippi Baptist disaster relief volunteers race to set up their mobile feeding unit after a tornado struck near Brandon in November 1992, killing several people and destroying dozens of homes. The huge tractor-trailer unit is currently in the Los Angeles area, preparing 10,000 meals a day and helping Californians devastated by a major earthquake on Jan. 17. See related item on page 3. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

Despite quake, pastor's wife sees "hand of God"

SYLMAR, Calif. (BP) — Like most people, Sharon Grubb is saddened by the scores of deaths and the billions of dollars in damage caused by the Jan. 16 Southern California earthquake. But despite the terrible losses, she has no doubt the "protective hand of God" was at work amid the destruction.

The quake "just brought out the awesomeness and the greatness and the majesty of God," Grubb said in a telephone interview. Speaking from the parsonage of First Church in Sylmar where her husband, Ray, is pastor, she added: "When you're in an earthquake or some natural catastrophe, that's just a fraction of God's great power. It's nothing compared to God and his magnificence."

Two days after the devastating trembler, Southern California residents continued picking up the pieces of lives the earthquake had so abruptly rearranged. Sharon Grubb helped her husband check on neighbors and church members, some of whom lived in mobile home parks ravaged by fire after the quake.

She even provided first aid to a woman bitten by a nervous pet dog. Grubb interrupted her description of events to announce the latest aftershock. "Here's another one, real mild," she said. "The

minor tremors don't bother me. But if we had another major one I'd be out the door in nothing flat!"

Although hundreds of aftershocks continued shaking the San Fernando Valley, signs of normal life were beginning to return. The Grubbs' electricity finally was restored Jan. 19.

"We were without electrical power for 48 hours. We had water Monday, but not Tuesday," Grubb said. The tap water was back on Wednesday, but residents were being warned to boil the water or treat it with chlorine.

Grubb, who described herself as "pretty blind" without her eyeglasses, laughed as she remembered praying during the 6.6-magnitude Richter Scale quake.

"The two things I was praying for during the earthquake were first for protection and second for my glasses," Grubb managed to locate a flashlight and found her unbroken glasses. No one in the house was injured.

"I'm sure a lot of people are stressed out, and without God they have nothing to hold on to, they have no hope," Grubb continued. She asked Baptists to "pray and intercede for those who don't know Christ, that they will begin to ask questions to make them more aware of God."

Mississippi Baptists in California quake area (see article, page 3)

Name	Hometown	Home church
Jerald Welch*	Greenwood	Calvary
Glenn Nace**	Kokomo	Kokomo
Steve Griffin**	Tylertown	Bogue Chitto
Bill Purvis	Ethel	Ethel
Charles Shaw	Eupora	First, Eupora
Clay Moss	Raymond	Park Place, Brandon
Talmadge Smith*	Brookhaven	First, B'haven
Sammy Platt	Columbus	First, Columbus
Boyce "Doc" Little	Carrollton	N. Carrollton
Eugene Dobbs***	Clinton	First, Clinton

*Associational director of missions

**Pastor

***MBCB administrative assistant for ministry

—Source: Mississippi Brotherhood Department

State Medicaid directors told they must pay for abortions

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP) — The Clinton administration has ordered state Medicaid directors to pay for abortions in cases of rape or incest, or where the life of the mother is endangered by continuing the pregnancy.

The new rules, retroactive to Oct. 1, have drawn sharp criticism from Medicaid officials in many states. In a letter written on behalf of the State Medicaid Director's Association, chairman Ray Hanley, who is also the Medicaid director of Arkansas, voiced his strong objection to the Clinton policy.

Hanley said the administration is misinterpreting an appropriations bill passed by Congress and signed by Clinton in October. The law gave states the option of paying for abortions in certain cases. "Congressional intent in this area was to be permissive for states, not mandatory," Hanley wrote.

But Sally Richardson, director of the federal Health Care Financing Administration's Medicaid Bureau, said the Clinton administration stands by its reading of the law, and believes that Congress

intended to require states to pay for abortions. According to Richardson, Medicaid must pay for any medically necessary treatment, and abortion is "medically necessary" when a pregnancy results from rape or incest.

Previously, federal Medicaid funds, which must be matched with state monies, had been provided only in cases where the mother's life was threatened by the pregnancy, but last year Congress expanded that exception to include pregnancies resulting from rape and incest.

Pro-life organizations have condemned the new policy as well. Wanda Franz, president of the National Right to Life Committee, said that women have traditionally abused rape exceptions. "Any woman can walk into a Medicaid clinic and say, 'I was raped,' and get an abortion," she contended.

Roughly half of the states have laws or constitutional amendments which forbid the use of public funds to pay for abortions unless the mother's life is threatened. Recent opinion polls suggest that

70% of Americans oppose the use of public funds for abortions.

Hanley says the administration's position forces states to choose between losing their Medicaid funds or violating state laws.

States have been given until March to repeal laws banning use of public funds for abortion, and can face suspension of federal Medicaid payments if they do not comply.

Douglas Johnson, legislative director for the National Right to Life Committee, said the Clinton policy violates verbal commitments made by Clinton last year.

"This is a violation of assurances given by administration spokespersons to Sen. Bob Kerrey (D-Neb.) and others respecting the right of states to keep abortion out of their Medicaid programs," said Johnson.

Kerrey sent a letter to Metro Right to Life of Omaha Oct. 29 saying he had been assured by the administration that "states, such as Nebraska, which do not allow state funds to be used for abortions, would not be required to accept federal funds for such procedures."

CLC issues moral framework for health care reform proposals

WASHINGTON (BP) — Describing Christians as "morally obligated" to address health care reform, the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission has issued documents outlining an ethical and theological framework by which to judge all such reform proposals.

The documents, "Health Care Reform: A Moral Preamble" and "Health Care Reform: A Statement of Concerns," were formulated and issued by the CLC after a Jan. 18 consultation in Washington sponsored by the agency. The private consultation featured medical ethicists, health care workers, and Southern Baptist agency representatives.

The CLC documents also specifically criticize aspects of President Clinton's proposal which the CLC says endanger the sanctity of human life, religious liberty, the physician-patient relationship, family relationships, and the ministry of Southern Baptist churches and agencies.

"We feel a special responsibility to address health care reform because President Clinton is a member of a Southern Baptist congregation," CLC Executive Director Richard Land said at a Jan. 19 news conference, "and many Southern Baptists are deeply opposed to numerous elements of the president's proposed agenda on health care reforms."

The documents will be used as an "interpretative and evaluative grid through which all proposed health care reform legislation will be analyzed and critiqued," Land said. The CLC is not supporting

one proposal over another, he said.

The CLC, which plans to distribute the documents to all SBC pastors, hopes Southern Baptists will use the statements to impact their senators and representatives, thereby moving health care reform in a direction satisfactory to the commission, Land said.

While the "Moral Preamble" provides a theological and philosophical framework for addressing health care, the "State-

ment of Concerns" specifies six fundamental concerns it has about the president's plan and those proposed by others.

The CLC previously had announced its opposition to the president's proposal as long as it included abortion coverage.

The commission also expressed concern about health care at the end of life. It will "contest any plan which opens the door to or actively promotes euthanasia..."

Cecil Sherman to stay with CBF, turns down Asheville pastorate

ASHEVILLE, N.C. (ABP) — Cecil Sherman, head of the moderate Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, has turned down an offer to leave the organization to become interim pastor of a North Carolina church.

Associated Baptist Press reported Jan. 11 that Sherman, 66, was considering the move to First Church, Asheville, N.C., where he previously served from 1964 to 1984. His successor, John Hewett, resigned suddenly last October for personal reasons.

Sherman said Jan. 10 he would consider leaving the Fellowship because of the physical demands of travel on both him and his wife, Dot. However, in his Jan. 13 statement to ABP, he said, "CBF is steadier, CBF's future is

brighter and my sense of calling to the Fellowship is stronger than it's ever been."

When Sherman became the Fellowship's first chief executive officer in March 1992, he said his age would probably limit his tenure to three or four years.

Sherman's decision to stay includes a commitment to reduce his travel schedule, according to Fellowship spokesman David Wilkison.

Under Sherman's leadership, the number of churches contributing to the Fellowship and the total annual income of the Atlanta-based organization has doubled. Contributions during 1993 were expected exceeded \$11 million from approximately 1,200 churches and an undetermined number of individuals.

New VBS materials designed to meet church and parents' needs

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP) — After five years of research and planning, the Baptist Sunday School Board is releasing a newly designed Vacation Bible School curriculum to meet the varying scheduling needs of churches.

"We've tried to respond to the expressed needs of churches and provide more flexibility and simplicity," Willie Beaty, the board's VBS administration consultant, said.

"Trail of Treasures" is the theme of the 1994 Convention Press curriculum which includes materials for preschoolers, children, youths, and adults. Beaty said administrative and teaching materials provide for a basic schedule of five three-hour sessions, but optional resources and suggestions in the "VBS Plan Book" allow churches to expand or abbreviate the schedule as needed.

The new curriculum was introduced earlier this month to 460 leaders enlisted by state conventions who attended the 1994 VBS

institutes, training meetings held in Kansas City, Mo., and at Glorieta (N.M.) and Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist conference centers.

The state leaders, in turn, will train workers to lead more than 1,400 associational VBS clinics across the country this spring.

"There is a trend of more churches moving to a night schedule (52% in 1992), and night schools almost dictate a shorter schedule," Beaty said. One possible explanation for the trend, he said, is a rise in the number of working mothers which often means a smaller number of available teachers for daytime VBS. Adult VBS classes usually are held at night as well, allowing parents and children to attend at the same time, he said.

Even so, Beaty said a growing number of churches are finding they can reach more children through VBS by providing an expanded daytime schedule to meet the needs of working parents.

"That way children who are nor-

mally dropped off at day care can be dropped off (for VBS) instead and then picked up when the parents get off work," he said.

Whatever schedule option a church uses for VBS, this summer's workers will notice a number of other curriculum and organizational changes, Beaty said, such as:

- the re-introduction of crafts as an enrichment activity;

- an organization built around a "team concept" using age-group teams;

- a worship service planned at the beginning of each day's VBS and featuring a processional of students;

- a new packaging approach designed to make ordering easier by using team leader packets for each age group and the VBS director;

- worship and Bible study materials written to relate to the New International Version of the Bible and Scripture memory verses printed in both the King James Version and NIV.

Baptist association postpones meeting, assesses quake damage

SAN FERNANDO, Calif. (BP) — Messengers from 35 churches and 14 missions in the San Fernando Valley Baptist Association

had to postpone their quarterly associational meeting Jan. 18 as recovery efforts continued following a devastating earthquake two

days earlier.

"We don't have an executive committee like many associations, so messengers from the churches meet four times a year," explained Charles McClung, director of missions. He said the meeting would be rescheduled for later this month.

In the meantime, McClung said damage assessments at churches in the association are incomplete.

"I haven't heard of any church that has been so damaged that they can't worship," McClung said. However, damaged roads and freeways plus an overtaxed telephone system have made gathering information difficult, he said.

Several church buildings in the association reportedly sustained cracked walls and floors, McClung said. A cracking floor apparently ripped apart a carpet in the auditorium of Mandarin Church in Northridge near the California State University campus were a number of students died during the Jan. 16 tremor.

Initial estimates placed damage at the Shepherd of the Hills Church in Porter Ranch at between \$500,000 to \$1 million. Still, the church is being used to shelter earthquake victims and as a feeding station and command post by Southern Baptist and Red Cross relief workers.

Other churches in Hollywood, Sylmar, North Hollywood, Santa Clarita and Canyon Country also sustained damage, but McClung said no repair estimates are available.

"Until they get an inspector out there they won't really know how bad the damage is," McClung said.

Nurses, med techs needed immediately in Burundi

The Foreign Mission Board has issued an emergency medical request for volunteer nurses or medical technicians to serve in Burundi for periods of one to three weeks, beginning immediately.

The request comes on the heels of a widespread epidemic of bacterial dysentery, along with malaria, measles, cholera, and meningitis.

Volunteers should be Baptist, with preferable qualifications in tropical medicine. They will be

lodged with missionary families, and work, most likely in the northern Kayanza province, where dispensaries and clinics are largely non-functional.

Each volunteer will be responsible for his/her own round trip airfare, approximately \$1,600 from Atlanta.

For more information, contact Mary Arrington at the Foreign Mission Board, 1-800-888-8657, area number 3.

Other Mississippians on Honduras trip

Name	City	Injuries
Michael Albert	Pearl	None
Bea Bond	Poplarville	Minor
Kathryn Carroll	Poplarville	None
Martha Dickens	Madison	None
Gale Harris	Poplarville	Minor
Carolyn Lane	Eupora	Serious
Richard Long	Poplarville	None
David Lossett	Carriere	Serious
Linda Lott	Brandon	Serious
Allen Mapp	Macon	None
Dorothy Matthews	Carriere	Minor
Delton Moor Sr.	Pearl	None
Carl Myers	Poplarville	None
Martha Presley	Florence	Minor
Frank Reese	Boyle	None
Ryan Reese	Boyle	None
Nell Shaw	Steens	Minor
Anne Stringer	Poplarville	Serious
Willie Stringer	Poplarville	Serious

—Source: Mississippi Baptist Brotherhood



State's BSU "Fishermen"

Members of The Fishermen, singing group of the Baptist Student Union of Mississippi State University, are (left to right): front row, Lisa Vanderford, Kosciusko; Michelle Barlow, Clinton; Melissa Poindexter, Olive Branch; Amy Teel, Clarksdale; back row, Dan Clinton, Clinton; Michael Steen, Independence; Rob Johnson, Canton; and Joe Tillman of Brownsville, Tenn.

Church loans division notes 1993 banner year

ATLANTA (BP) — The Home Mission Board's church loans division closed a record high of \$28.2 million in loans last year, said Bob Inlow, division director.

That compares to \$18 million in 1992 and \$14.8 million in 1991, Inlow said. The previous record was \$21.7 million in 1989.

The average loan was \$235,000, and 75% of the loans were for less than \$300,000. The smallest loan was \$2,489; the largest, \$1.3 million.

The record level resulted from a fully staffed division that expanded the lending ministry to more churches, Inlow said. The high volume also reduced the cost per loan, he added.

New loan options also helped increase the division's portfolio. The division now offers three-, five- and seven-year adjustable

rate mortgages with interest rates ranging from 7.5 to 8.4% in mid-January.

Churches buying their first property can get a seven-year loan with the first 12 months interest free. The division now also offers refinancing.

Interest rates are competitive, Inlow said, and many congregations prefer to secure loans through the church loans division because their interest payments are invested in other loans for churches.

The church loan program began in 1882 with \$500 as the lender of last resort in areas where Southern Baptists were unknown. The priority is still on smaller churches building their first units, but the division has expanded the ministry to established congregations.

Many Christians have choked up over the words of Ira Staphill's song, below. Brad Boatner came close to singing it with perfection:

O Jesus, if I die upon
A foreign field someday,
'Twould be no more than love demands
No less could I repay.
No greater love hath mortal man
Than for a friend to die.
These are the words
He gently spoke to me:
If just a cup of water I place within your hand
Then just a cup of water is all that I demand.
But if by death to living
They can Thy glory see,
I'll take my cross and follow close to Thee.

Like Joseph and David of old, God had a plan. He can see the total picture, and he tapped a young man on the shoulder.

The young man's pastor, Bobby Williamson, said, "God does not make mistakes and he called one of his choicest young people." Perhaps Brad remembered another song:

My house is full but my fields are empty,
Who will go and work for me today?

Brad Boatner was determined there would be one less at the table and one more in the field. — GH

Isolation puts pastors at risk of sexual sin

It is an axiom of the preaching trade: there is no quicker way to self-destruct in the ministry than to be caught in adultery.

From King David's tryst with Bathsheba to Jim Bakker's affair with Jessica Hahn, the reputation of the "man of God" has been tainted by sexual scandal.

While most preachers begin their ministries forewarned, and buttressed with all good intentions, all face sexual temptation and many succumb.

When they fall, they usually land hard. And no wonder. Preachers have an image as sexual killjoys, railing against the evils of sexual license. When they are caught in their own snare, they find little sympathy from the watching public, which reserves its harshest judgment for religious hypocrites.

A world that may have been shocked by the televangelist scandals of the 1980s has now grown accustomed to a steady stream of risque revelations involving Christian leaders of all stripes. The public reaction is now less shock but no less scorn.

Is the disdain warranted? How common is sexual misconduct among clergy?

Counselors who work with wayward ministers agree more incidents of sexual misconduct are coming to light today. But they disagree on whether the problem is actually worse or if exposure is simply more common.

"What's changed is people aren't keeping quiet about this," said Mark Jensen, a Baptist chaplain and counselor in Winston-Salem, N.C. "We are in a cultural transition that won't put up with it anymore."

Shifts in the public mindset on sex abuse and women's issues are making it harder to sweep ministerial misconduct under the rug, said Jensen, chaplaincy supervisor at North Carolina Baptist Hospital in Winston-Salem.

"It's been underground, but now the masks are coming off," agreed Norris Smith, a church-staff consultant at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

"It is documented. We can no longer ignore it. We need to address it."

Smith tracks minister firings, which averaged 116 a month in the Southern Baptist Convention in 1988. Immorality — sexual and other kinds — was the second leading cause of pastor firings in Smith's 1988 study. Lack of communication was first.

In a survey in *Christianity Today* magazine, in which pastors told on themselves, 12% said they had engaged in sexual intercourse outside of marriage and 23% admitted to some other form of extramarital sexual contact.

That was lower than for the lay people who responded to the survey (23% and 28%). And both clergy and laity can claim to be more faithful than the general population, about half of whom admit to extramarital affairs in similar surveys.

But the frequency among clergy is still enough to cause concern.

"According to informed estimates, about 15% (of clergy) either have or are violating sexual ethical boundaries," said Baptist counselor Roy Woodruff, executive director of the 3,000-member American Association of Pastoral Counselors.

While sex scandals in the Catholic priesthood have grabbed the headlines in recent months, Southern Baptists also have been stung by revelations about the sexual dalliances of high-profile pastors in their own fold.

Woodruff said no denomination has escaped the spotlight of scandal. "It's across denominational lines. We work with 60 to 70 faith groups, and we see no pattern."

Counselors and denominational workers say sexual misconduct has invaded big-city superchurches, small-town pastorates, and both ends of the theological spectrum.

If virtually all pastors are tempted to sin sexually, why do some fall and others don't? Any adequate answer is complex. A decision to stray is seldom an isolated action, say both counselors and offenders, but is more often a confluence of circumstances and motivations, few of them simple.

Woodruff said those who succumb often fit one of two profiles — the "prima donna" and the depressed pastor.

"The prima donna pastor is one who operates out of a lot of power and control, loses touch with appropriate boundaries and overdirects people's lives," Woodruff said. Such a leader "develops a sense of 'I can do no wrong,'" he added.

Central to this type of thinking is the idea of entitlement, Woodruff explained, "that somehow they are entitled to certain behaviors that others are not entitled to.... That's the most dangerous pattern because that person seems to be a repeat offender."

The modern megachurch presents an unusually ripe setting for prima donna pastors, the counselors agreed. The megachurch tends to flourish under a charismatic, authoritative personality, who often operates in a realm somewhat removed from his parishioners and therefore tends to become larger than life in their eyes — and ultimately his own.

Some of these superchurch pastors eventually begin "living above the law," concluding "the rules

don't apply to me," explained sex-abuse expert Marie Fortune of Seattle, who has written a book on pastoral sexual misconduct.

This "Lone Ranger" pastor, as Fortune calls him, inhabits not only the rarified air of the megachurch and televangelist but also the more mundane

Explains Roy Woodruff: "The other extreme is the depressed pastor, whose judgment becomes cloudy because of very low self-esteem and a kind of depression in which he can function but not very well. So he becomes more vulnerable to relationships that

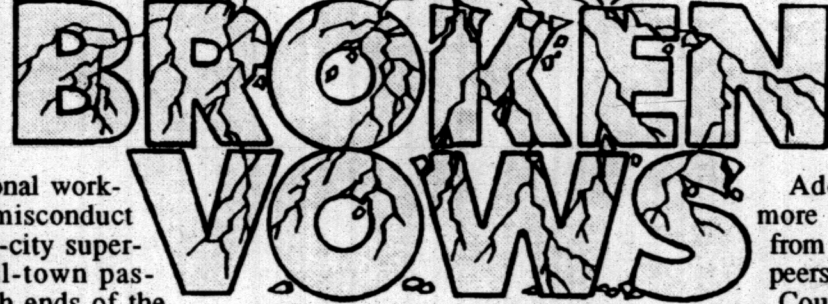
provide gratification." For many people, pastors included, the extra-

marital affair begins not in a search for sexual gratification but in a desire to be understood. "It's someone who knows your stresses, who likes you — a soul mate," explained one female observer. "It becomes very easy to think that sex is just an extension of friendship."

The prima donna and the depressed pastor share one fatal weakness, counselors agree — isolation.

Added Woodruff: "The more isolated one becomes from a supportive group of peers, the greater the risk."

Couple that with a heavy workload, Woodruff said, and you have the most common recipe for sexual misconduct.



world of the county-seat pastorate. This is the world of the depressed pastor.

Prevention is the best protection in pastoral sexual misconduct cases

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (ABP) — When it comes to protecting churches from damages associated with sexual misconduct, the proverbial ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, according to a Baptist legal specialist.

Brent Walker, general counsel at the Washington-based Baptist Joint Committee, said the reported incidence of sexual misconduct by clergy and other church employees is escalating and drawing greater attention in the courts and the media.

"More clergy are sued for sexual misconduct than for any other reason," Walker said. "It is much wiser and easier, not to mention more cost effective, for churches to take steps to avoid this problem than to deal with its consequences."

"Most importantly, churches should do this for the sake of preventing harm to potential victims," he said.

Churches ignore this issue at their own peril, Walker warned, because many courts are making it easier for victims to recover damages not only from offending clergy and other employees but also from the church or religious

agency involved.

"You would expect ministers to be sued when they exploit their position for sexual or financial reasons, but courts are increasingly extending liability to the church or organization where they work."

Churches' responsibility to exercise "reasonable" care applies not only to the hiring process, but also in supervising both employees and volunteers.

Walker said the price for churches failing to act responsibly as employers can be high in a number of areas, including shattered lives, wrecked marriages, scarred children, and derailed careers. In addition, the financial costs can be staggering.

He cited \$2.7 million in punitive damages awarded by a Minnesota trial court in a child-molestation case and reports that a New Mexico Catholic archdiocese may have to seek bankruptcy protection because of sex-abuse lawsuits seeking \$50 million in damages.

"Courts are less and less inclined to wink at abusive behavior by clergy and churches," he said.

Walker suggested five precau-

Why? "You are giving out a lot and not doing anything to take in — spiritually, emotionally, relationally — and you are probably having diminishing positive interaction with your own spouse and family. It creates more possibility of burnout."

Ironically, a pastor can become vulnerable to an affair at a time when, for all appearances, he is at the height of his career, having achieved most all of his goals. It is then that some pastors wake up suddenly and ask themselves, "Is this all there is?"

Jensen, an associate with the Baptist Center for Ethics, said he has seen pastor-support groups work. "These are people who love you enough to tell you the truth, who will let you be who you are, instead of needing you to be someone you're not."

It is equally important, however, for pastors to deal honestly with their personal needs — physical, spiritual, and emotional — the counselors said. They should attend to the "ordinary things" that constitute self-care, Jensen said, including prayer, family time, vacations, time apart from the congregation, continuing education, and time alone.

"We need the courage and grace to face ourselves," Jensen concluded.

Those who end up in extramarital affairs, he said, are finally forced to do just that, "to say, 'I'm a needy soul too.'"

"I just wish it didn't have to be so public and final." — (ABP)

tions churches may take:

— Conduct a thorough background check when hiring ministers and other employees and soliciting volunteers, paying particular attention to any allegations of sexual misconduct.

— A minister, other employee, or volunteer accused of sexual misconduct ordinarily should be suspended while a full investigation is conducted.

Because the church has an obligation to protect ministers and others in its supervision from unsubstantiated charges, the investigation should be conducted as carefully and privately as possible.

— Professional rehabilitative treatment should be required for ministers and other employees not terminated after their involvement in sexual misconduct.

— Churches have a moral and legal obligation to disclose substantiated incidents of sexual misconduct when a prospective employer inquires about a former minister's employment record.

— Maintain adequate liability insurance covering sexual misconduct.

Chesser is staff writer for BJCPA.

HOUSE TOPS

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light: and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the housetops. Matthew 10:27 NAS

January 27, 1994

HouseTops is a supplement to the **Baptist Record** and is produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

GREETINGS FROM BEIT BRIDGE, ZIMBABWE

Mike and Susan Loftice are representing Mississippi Baptists in Zimbabwe on a two-year mission project teaching how to grow sorghum. Following are excerpts of Mike's reports.

We baptized 57 new converts in the village of Mudanamba on Sunday (shortly before Christmas). This is the newest church started as an outgrowth of the sorghum project.

Susan has begun a ministry at the Beit Bridge hospital with the ladies from the Beit Bridge Baptist Church—visiting and sharing the gospel. She is starting an outreach Bible study group for members and non-members of the Beit Bridge Church. Please pray for her and the other ladies as they minister in these ways. She is discussing with the ladies some other ways to minister (through cooking and health classes), but these are not yet finalized as to the means.

We want to again thank the Mississippi Partnership for their faithful support of missions throughout Zimbabwe and more specifically in Beit Bridge. The Loftice family could not be a witness for the Lord here in Beit Bridge if it were not for the great support we have from Mississippi Baptists. THANKS! We are honored and privileged to be your missionaries.

The project is in full-swing now and we are busy assisting farmers in 24 villages throughout the Beit Bridge district. This is up from the 22 villages we originally reported. Two other villages requested our technical advice even without the promise of seed for this year. This being Christmas week, we haven't scheduled any field visitations. We will be returning to the communal areas on Tuesday, December 28, 1993. We are in the process now of going to each communal farm to see with our own eyes what the farmers are doing on their individual farms. We have most of the sorghum planted now and much of it germinated and growing. We have received some very excellent rainfall to date, but need to pray for continued good rains. The soil dries so quickly here. Presently, the soil moisture is very good. We have not received any measurable rainfall since my last letter to you, so we have received a little over 6 inches total so

far. The weather patterns are very unpredictable lately. The skies look as though rain is inevitable, yet no more rain has come. Keep praying.

We are currently experiencing a problem with rats. That's right, R-A-T-S, rats. They are digging up the young seedlings to get at the grain. Poison is out of the question as many of the village people eat them. The people in the project are afraid to use poison in fear of poisoning one of their neighbors. (I wasn't too clear. The people eat the rats, not poison!) The people say they have had this problem of rats before, but it has been several years ago. As the grass and brush begin to green-up and grow, the rats are becoming



Fourth from left, Mike Loftice, off loads equipment with farmers.

less of a problem. We have instructed the farmers to drill the seed in each row instead of placing a step apart. This also seems to be lessening the problem. It makes us all realize how much we must rely upon the Lord for our needs. We thank the men of the agricultural fellowship for your continued prayer support for this project.

Soon, the sorghum will be mature enough that rats will no longer pose a problem. I am really looking forward to being able to go to each farmer's place and visit with them one-on-one in their fields and homes. We are seeing the communal churches becoming stronger through this project and also many new doors to witnessing being opened. We have scheduled, between Ron and myself, revivals every weekend from January through April. We also have at least four strong prospects for starting four new churches. Pray especially for these new church starts. We are very excited about the days and months ahead and we

hope that you are excited with us.

I would like to ask you to pray with us about the problem of "demon worship." There is demon worship throughout all of the villages. Some of our church leaders in the communal areas have expressed that some of these people are trying to influence their church members to quit worshipping Jesus and to start worshipping the demons. As we meet with the sorghum project participants from each of the villages, it really helps to encourage them to continue to grow in their faith. Our project meetings also enable us to preach the Gospel and to denounce demonic worship practices before believers and non-believers alike. Pray for the strengthening of our Zimbabwean Baptist brothers/sisters and for deliverance from demonic and other pagan/animistic worship for their non-Christian countrymen.

Thank you all again for your financial support, prayer support, and words of encouragement. We could not be effective missionaries without you. We hope you had a truly joyful Christmas and that your new year is filled with the blessings of Christ's love. □

**Please
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change...**

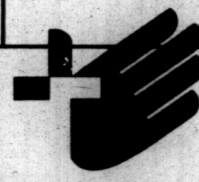


In the last issue of **HouseTops**, the deadline to register for the **Glorieta WMU Conference** was shown as January 25. The deadline has been extended to February 10.

For complete details and registration information contact Kay Cassibry at (601) 968-3800.

pray this day....

February 1-15, 1994

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Prayer Ministry Office Baptist Building, Jackson PrayerLine 1-800-787-PRAY		that your church's leaders will involve your church in the entire Season of Home Missions 1	for the estimated 750,000 Americans, two-thirds of them women and children, who sleep on the street every night 2	for the 40 million Americans who try cocaine, crack, or marijuana each year; the median age when drugs are first used is 11.9 years 3	for the one in five adults in America who does not read well enough to complete a job application or read the daily newspaper 4	for the approximately 37 million people who have little or no health care because they cannot pay for it 5
	for the approximately 36 million disabled people in our country 6	for the people affected by the 1,500,000 abortions each year 7	for the 500,000 homeless children in the United States, whose average age is six 8	for the forty-three percent of these homeless children who do not attend school 9	for the 2.5 million people displaced from their homes each year by eviction and/or spiraling rent 10	for the 13.8 million children living in poverty-one out of five 11
	for the more than 10,000 refugees resettled by Southern Baptists since 1975, resulting in 307 language-culture congregations 13	for the problems resulting from the fact that Americans need 600 languages to communicate with one another 14	that we will break the pattern of the past 10 years when the AAEO goal has not been met, knowing that all the above groups are a focus of our home missions agenda for which the offering goes 15	 <p>IT'S YOUR SERVE Minister in Christ's Name</p>		



Eighth
Mississippi Baptists
In Broadcasting

AWARDS
ENTRY
BLANK

PURPOSE

The MBIB Awards have been created to recognize radio and video productions which demonstrate excellence in message design and production in helping to bring Mississippi and the world to Jesus.

WHEN: April 22-23, 1994—Awards Banquet Friday, April 22, 7-9 p.m.
Workshops on Saturday, April 23, 8 a.m.-3:15 p.m.

WHERE: Calvary Baptist Church, 1300 West Capitol Street, Jackson

AWARDS WILL BE GIVEN IN THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES:

- BEST PROGRAM (One award for video-broadcast or non-broadcast—and one for radio in each category)
 - MISSIONS/EVANGELISM
 - CHURCH MUSICALS
 - HUMAN INTEREST
 - COMMUNITY SERVICE
 - SPORTS
- BEST SPOT (One award for TV and one for radio)
- Judges will make one award for CREATIVE USE OF TELEVISION OR RADIO (at judges discretion)

ENTRY PROCEDURE:

- Each entry must include: • An entry form, description, and fee
• **A \$5.00 fee per entry** (Make checks payable to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board)
- A separate entry form and fee is required for each category entered.
Duplicate the entry form, if necessary.
- Entry fee does not apply to workshop registration fee.
- Submit video program and spot entries on 1/2 inch VHS OR S-VHS videotape.
Submit audio program and spot entries on audio cassette tape
- Submit each program entry on a separate tape and clearly label with:
 - Name of Local ACTS Board or Church
 - Title of Entry
 - Category Name
 - Original Running Time
- The program should have been aired or viewed prior to March 6, 1994
- The judges reserve the right to move an entry to an appropriate category, add or delete categories.

Entries must be postmarked no later than **March 7, 1994.**

ENTRY FORM

Entry Title _____
 Category Name _____ Original Running Time _____
 Name of Entrant (LAB, Church, etc.) _____
 Contact Person _____ Position _____
 Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Office phone _____ Home phone _____
 SHOULD YOU WIN...give exact name of organization as you want it to appear on award _____

Date Entry Shown: _____

Statement of Purpose:

Results/Response:

I CERTIFY THAT THE WORK SUBMITTED IN THIS ENTRY IS MY PERSONAL WORK OR WAS DONE UNDER MY DIRECT SUPERVISION.

Signature: _____

ENTRIES SHOULD BE MAILED TO:

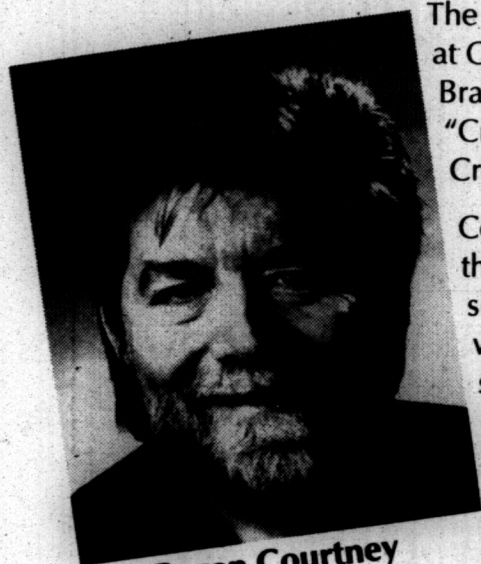
Farrell Blankenship, MBIB Entry or
P. O. Box 530
Jackson, MS 39205-0530

Farrell Blankenship, MBIB Entry
515 Mississippi Street
Jackson, MS 39201-1702

HOUSE

Christianity & Creativity

Ragan Courtney, worship drama consultant for the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, will be a special guest speaker during the Christian Performing Arts Festival in Brandon, Feb. 25-26.



Ragan Courtney

The festival takes place at Crossgates Church, Brandon. The theme is "Created to be Creative."

Courtney will lead three conference sessions on the drama of worship, plus another session of dialogue with participants. The topic includes dramatic presentations as part of worship from mono-

logues to dramatic sequences to plays to pageants.

Courtney wrote the lyrics for the pulpit drama "Celebrate Life!" and was associate professor of church drama at Southern Seminary, Louisville, for five years.

Other special guests include The Company, a Christian drama troupe based at Southwestern Seminary, Fort Worth, and Tom Toombs, a drama evangelist from Sevierville, Tenn.

Classes include tracks for clowning, puppetry, acting, directing, story telling, magic, balloon sculpturing, choreography, script writing, and technical support. Separate classes are set for adults.

Cost is \$6 for a 6 p.m. banquet, plus \$14 for the festival itself (which includes breakfast and lunch the second day).

To register, write Wes Pegues, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205. Make checks payable to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

Those with registrations postmarked Feb. 1 or earlier, receive a festival T-shirt on arrival.

The program is sponsored by the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. □

Gulfshore Youth Conferences 1994

MUSICIANS:
Conferences I- III
Mack and Shayla Blake
Conferences IV - VI
To Be Announced

KEYS4U

DATES AND SPEAKERS:

Conference I May 30 - June 3
Rev. Don Gann, Campus Minister
Mississippi College, Clinton

Conference II June 3 - 7
Rev. Gary Permenter, Minister to Students
Mt. Vernon Baptist Church, Columbus

Conference III June 7 - 11
Rev. Rob Boyd, Pastor
FBC, Indianola

Conference IV June 13 - 17
Rev. Jon Daniels, Minister to Youth
FBC, Brookhaven

Conference V June 17 - 21
Mr. Rhett Whitley, Regional Coordinator
Fellowship of Christian Athletes

Conference VI June 21 - 25
Rev. Greg Warnock, Pastor
Tate Baptist Church, Corinth

TOPIC AND MATERIALS: Centrifuge material - "Keys for the Journey"

PURPOSE: To use creative Bible study, special interest groups, fun recreation, and evangelistic celebrations in a retreat setting to help youth live out God's Word in their world.

COST: \$119 per person

REGISTRATION: Begins on March 1, 1994. This should be sent to Gulfshore Baptist Assembly, 100 First Street, Pass Christian, MS 39571.

For program information contact Jim Didlake, Brotherhood Department, 968-3800, ext. 3937. For registration information contact Gulfshore Baptist Assembly, 452-7261.

ENCOURAGING AND EQUIPPING

Leaders

Alta Woods Baptist Church
Jackson, Miss.
March 28-31, 1994



T.W. Hunt
Author of
Prayer, Life,
and The Mind of
Christ



Jay Johnston
National
Consultant for
Senior Adults



Ralph Hodge
National
Consultant for
Contemporary Church
Leadership



J. David Carter
National
Consultant for
Life/MasterLife



Todd Nelson
National
Consultant for Youth
Discipleship



Johnny Jones
National
Consultant for
Support Groups



Don Atkinson
National
Consultant for Adult
Discipleship

Track Opportunities

- Multiple-Day Workshops
- Evening Workshops
- One-Day Workshops



For more information, call Robin Nichols at (601)968-3800, ext. 3888



• Rehearsal Camp •

July 25-27, 1994
Mississippi College
Clinton
and

• Tour •

July 27—Aug. 1, 1994

CHORAL DIRECTOR
Dr. Richard Joiner
Chairman, Music Department
Mississippi College

Auditioned choir of 9th - 12th Graders

Churches and Associations are urged to establish scholarships to aid their selected youth with the estimated cost of \$250.00 per choir member.

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST ALL-STATE YOUTH CHOIR AUDITIONS REGISTRATION FORM

(These forms are to be duplicated. Use to make multiple copies)

LOCATION AND DATE OF AUDITION _____

NAME _____

AGE _____ GRADE _____ YEARS OF CHORAL EXPERIENCE _____

ADDRESS _____

Street City Zip

PHONE NO. _____

CHURCH _____

ADDRESS _____

Street City Zip

PHONE NO. _____

MUSIC DIRECTOR _____

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Festival 9:30 - 1:30 p.m.



Steve Roddy

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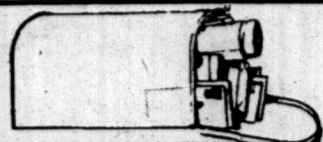
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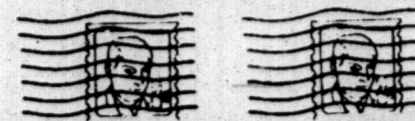


For more information contact the
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HOUSE OF



Letters to the editor



Pastor should guide

Editor:

Jesus' care is for people, not for the clergy's need for authority. Jesus preached a message of freedom. Pastors should resist the temptation to run a church like a business and lord over the people, like the pagans do. Jesus never intended to start a business, but to lay a foundation for a closely-knit family of people caring for each other.

As it is, the church has become a structure superimposed on the life of the people. Their role is to just support the structure.

In a real community of Christians, the people are the heart of the community. The pastor is for them a gentle guide, offering for them advice and counsel when needed. There is a genuine love that inspires a community like this. That is what Jesus wanted. The concern for people should never have to take second place.

I long for the time when our pastors begin again preaching against sin, warning people of the pitfalls and the ugly temptations that are more prevalent than in days past. Sermons to tickle the ears and make their people more comfortable seem to be the order of the day. Pastors will be held accountable for this in judgment. Wake up before it is too late.

Tom Walden
Jackson

"War" not intended

Editor:

Statements we have made about missionary support and the Foreign Mission Board reserve fund have been interpreted as "sparking a war of words" with some of the Board's staff. We want to make clear that was never our intention.

We were answering specific questions from concerned Baptists, such as "If the Lottie Moon Offering and the Cooperative Program funds go down, will missionaries be stranded without salary and support?" We answered that we did not believe so, because tradition and inertia would keep most Southern Baptists giving to missions through traditional channels.

But, we added, that in the event of some decline, the FMB had reserve funds for just such contingencies. The amount is a matter of record in the annual report. We were not criticizing the existence of the fund. In fact, the Southern Baptist Convention has been wise in requiring the fund as protection for the missionaries in times of financial crisis.

The people asking the questions we were answering had the mistaken concept that the Board would not be able to pay missionaries' salaries or that they would be left stranded on the field. In addition to the reserve fund, there are other accounts to which the Board would likely turn before

reducing missionary support. We were speaking to that concern.

We are grateful to see that more money has moved through the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship to the Foreign Mission Board than the amount reduced through the Cooperative Program. Because of certain dynamics in our convention controversy, we are convinced that there would have been less money for foreign missions if CBF had not been in existence.

We are also convinced because of what many grassroots Southern Baptists have told us personally, that money coming to the CBF missions program would not have gone to the FMB. Since many who have been excluded from full participation in our convention have opted out of traditional mission channels, we believe that the additional option offered by CBF will enable our Southern Baptist family to send more money and missionaries and, thus, reach more of the world's lost people than would have happened otherwise.

May God bless and use both channels.

Harlan E. Spurgeon,
R. Keith Parks
Global Missions Office
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

Praise for youths

Editor:

Can you remember the last time a group of our young people took a public stand on a godly issue — especially one so deserving of attention as the recent revival of the issue of school prayer?

As a youth of the '60s I do not recall our ever standing to publicly defend any cause remotely labeled as Christians or even moral for that matter, we were busy being rebellious and defensive as youth so often become in the years of searching to identify ourselves and gain independence.

We are now seeing what I perceive to be a strong core of Christian young people today like we have not seen in my 40-plus years. I know they are there because I work with them in our church youth department. First, they are well-grounded spiritually and they know what they believe and are willing to stand for it. Secondly, they are stronger in numbers than most of us dare to believe or admit.

Another concern on the school prayer issue that troubles me greatly is the lack of affirmative response and/or support from some adults and even pastors. The issue is either treated lightly or not at all. We are told that the "freedom thing" about prayer could backfire and Christians could end up worse off than we are now. Does this mean silence will win us our desires? I hardly think so!

We all want our country healed. Two scriptures that give the key for this healing: 2 Timothy 4:1-5 and 2 Chronicles 7:14.

Finally, one more word to these young people — I'm very proud of you. I encourage you to stay grounded in God's Word. 1 Timothy 4:12 says, "Let no man despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity" (NKJ).

Billy Amos
Brookhaven

Reclaim "priesthood"

Editor:

Much about the conflict within the SBC can be seen in the article about a talk by W.A. Criswell. Two partial quotes are "I run the church" and "The man of God who is pastor of the church is the ruler." These quotes reflect the current position of the SBC leadership whereas the overwhelming dominance of the CBF is lay persons.

The position of Criswell and the other SBC leaders is akin to that of the medieval Catholic Church. This shouldn't be surprising, since much of their doctrine comes from Augustine. At least Criswell is now referring to those with the intelligence to oppose him as "liberals" rather than his previous-term of brotherly love, "skunks."

When lay people once again start holding the Baptist doctrine of "priesthood of the believers" they will change the direction of the SBC. They may even have another lay person as president.

Ray A. Thompson
Jackson

Abortion is holocaust

Editor:

Sunday, Jan. 16, was "Sanctity of Human Life" Sunday across the nation in our churches. I think that this is a good idea to set aside a Sunday in the year when we emphasize that all human life is sacred, and abortion is murder. But let us not salve our conscience with this one effort and say that we have done our duty when 30,000,000-plus precious babies have already died, and the killing goes on in our own state, in Jackson and Southaven, every week.

In speaking to churches in my area, I have come to the conclusion that one reason abortion has been allowed to continue in this land of ours is because of the lack of education about what an abortion is and what it entails. We have bought into the abortionists' lie that a baby is just a "blob of tissue" or just a fetus. This is terminology that makes a human being a non-person. God help us! This is how Hitler got away with killing the Jews, blacks, and gypsies. They became non-persons and not worthy to live.

By the time a baby is old enough to be aborted, that baby has a heart beat and brain waves that can be detected. Everything that a baby needs to live is already in place. The child just needs time

to grow in the mother's womb. The baby feels the pain as the suction machine used by the abortionist rips off its little arms and legs.

In Genesis God stated that the voice of the blood of Abel called up to him from the ground. What a stench must arise to the nostrils of God from our land drenched in the blood of 30,000,000 babies that God created and we deemed unworthy to live.

I encourage each Christian and each church to get involved in fighting abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia. Join a pro-life organization and find out what you can do to stop this holocaust in America. Abortion continues because the church allows it to continue. We will be held accountable.

Sandra Pierce
Laurel

Amazing conclusions

Editor:

I don't know anything about W.A. Criswell except that during his long ministry at First Church of Dallas the church greatly increased in numbers and service in the kingdom's work. It seems to me that he had what could be described as a "very successful pastorate."

[Jerry] Vardaman made some statements ("Scholar responds to Criswell's claims of pastor as ruler," Baptist Record, Jan. 13, page 12) that greatly bother me. In reading his treatment of Acts 15:38, 2 Timothy 4:11, and Colossians 4:10, I wonder if he has considered that perhaps it was Mark who became mature enough to become profitable to Paul for the Lord's ministry, and not the other way around.

Even more amazing to me is Vardaman's ability to read into scriptures things that they do not even allude to. Acts 21:9 simply says, "And the same man had four daughters, virgins, who did prophesy." From this scripture, how does Vardaman determine that "Paul apparently profited from the insights gained also from Philip's unmarried daughters who served as prophets at Caesarea?"

I strongly urge we put aside our vast knowledge, forget our extensive education, long enough to come to Jesus as a little child. This recipe works. I know because it worked for me.

L.V. Shoemaker
Collins

Abandoned intent

Editor:

I just finished reading Frank Stagg's article on the significance of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (Baptist Record, Jan. 13, page 10).

All of the examples he cited involving persecution occurred while our forefathers were still subject to the king of England and the Church of England. Notice the dates: 1611, 1612,

1673, 1638, 1663, etc.

It is properly stated that the colonists wanted no more of state-sponsored churches, and that is the purpose of the First Amendment, stated very clearly: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

Today, no one can seriously contend that we are in danger of the federal government establishing a state-approved and -sponsored church, prohibited by the first phrase of the First Amendment. Our current and real danger is the violation of the second phrase, "...prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

We have over 200 years of precedents, both legal and by customs, recognized by the Supreme Court which actually has ruled in 1892 that ours is a Christian nation.

Our problem began when a liberal Court ignored these precedents and the time-honored process of determining original intent of our founding fathers and simply substituted their opinion as to how things ought to be.

Finally, the church in the United States has never threatened the state. It is the state which threatened the church, and which has given us freedom from religion, not freedom of religion. Incidentally, Bishop Knox contends that if he had refused permission for the student prayer he would have been in violation of the Constitution.

I am appalled that I find some of our Christian leaders taking the same position as the leading atheist of the United States and the ACLU!

Roy V. Sims
Jackson

At 96, still ministers

Editor:

R.K. Stewart, a resident of the Mitchell Center, Natchez Trace Retirement Center at Tupelo is 96 years old, legally blind, and deaf. He spends a lot of time writing about the Bible. He taught Sunday School for 54 years. Since he has no relatives able to visit him, my wife and I try to minister to his needs.

I have enclosed a copy of his writing.

Eugene and Ruth Spearman
Saltillo

Editor's Note: It's good to have such helpful people to visit those in need. Thanks for the creative writing of Mr. Stewart.

Coffin on target

Editor:

William Sloane Coffin, in your "Thoughts by a graveside" (Baptist Record, Jan. 6, page 2) said it plainly, beautifully, and, I believe, exactly right.

Mary M. Jones
Yazoo City

Names in the News

Sam Pittman has been named executive director of public affairs for the Foreign Mission Board.



Pittman

Pittman, a 20-year veteran with the board, will continue his long-term responsibilities for the board's relationships with other Southern Baptist Convention entities, state conventions, associations, and churches. He will also administer the board's Cooperative Program emphasis

and supervise public affairs staff.

Three Mississippi College faculty members will be involved in the presentation of "Die Schone Magelone" by Johannes Brahms, Feb. 1, at 8:15 p.m. in Aven Auditorium. Steve Cook, art department; James Richard Joiner, music department; and Patricia Walston, pianist, will make the presentation.

Dan and Libby Panter, missionaries on furlough, left the States Jan. 24 to serve as associate to the area director for Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Their new address is

Krauskopfallee 39, 65388 Schlangenbad-Georgenborn, Strasse Nr. 39, Germany.

Ollwyn C. Abbott, national secretary of the Baptist Union of Australia, was killed in a car accident Jan. 10, while driving from Brisbane to Melbourne with his wife, Winsome, following the National Baptist Family Convention. Winsome Abbott is currently in the Grafton, New South Wales, hospital suffering from a broken arm and severe bruises. Since 1990 Abbott has been an Australian representative on the general council of the Baptist World Alliance.

E.R. Walker, former Hawaii executive dies

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (BP)—Edmond R. Walker, Hawaii Baptist Convention executive secretary-treasurer for 19 years, died Jan. 19 following an extended illness. He was 75.

Walker held the Hawaii convention's executive position from 1963-82 and also was editor of the convention paper, The Hawaii Baptist, during that time.

Walker is survived by his wife, the former Lurie Brown of Louisville, Ky., and two adult sons, Edmond "Richie" Jr. and Howard.

Just for the Record

Leaf River Church, Smith County, has planned a gospel sing for every fifth Sunday night in the year, 6-8 p.m. The "Shepherds of Love" from Mize will perform Jan. 30. For more information, call Linda Chuter at (601) 798-5264.

First Church, Laurel, will host the Men's Annual Wild Game Supper Feb. 7 at 7 p.m. in its Family Life Center. Admission price is a covered dish of wild game or a dessert. Guest will be humorist Dennis Swanberg. For more information, call (601) 649-5710. Randy Turner is pastor.

BOATNER

From page 3

"Brad has been commended by the apostle Paul for being all things to all people. Jesus has welcomed his 'good and faithful servant,'" Swing said.

Williamson told friends and family gathered at the church that a spiral notebook had been found in Brad's Brandon High School locker. In the notebook were personal thoughts on his spiritual life and his yearning for people to accept the gospel message.

"Brad wrote, 'Keep God first in your life. Remember that God's will is perfect,'" Williamson said.

Williamson closed the service by giving attendees the opportunity to accept Christ as Savior. As hands shot up all across the sanctuary, he implored those who had accepted Christ to talk with a pastor about their baptism and getting

involved in church.

As people filed out of the sanctuary after the service, many tearfully touched Brad's senior portrait displayed on an easel, and bade him farewell.

E.P. Baldwin dies Dec. 30

E.P. Baldwin, retired minister, died Dec. 30 in Tupelo. Services were held Jan. 1 at Shiloh Church, Corinth, with Pete Wooley, Howard Curbow, and Dave Smith officiating.

Baldwin preached for over 40 years in Mississippi, Tennessee, Georgia, and Ohio. He participated in seven evangelism crusades to Argentina and Brazil.

Survivors include his wife Lee Ann of Corinth; son Randall of Sandusky, Ohio; three brothers; two sisters; and eight grandchildren.

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LifeAnswers



Ron Mumbower, Ed.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

I am in contact with a child who is very intelligent, but his parents have no patience with him, especially his father. The child seems to feel unloved and gets little attention. I know I cannot interfere, but maybe you could give some advice.

All children try to please their parents, especially their fathers. As parents, we are the best examples of God to our children. Just as we need to know God is there for us, children need to know their parents are there for them. A card on my desk says, "A child loves his mother, but lives for his father." The role men play is essential to our children, to provide examples of strength, stability, and security.

The child you refer to seeks his father's love. If his father and/or mother do not take an interest, not only will the child seek attention by misbehavior but may turn to others for approval. This could lead to drugs, homosexuality, or violence. The ultimate cost of this rejection is that this child will not find the heavenly Father.

Surrogate parents (like you) can show the necessary love and attention. Keep standing in the gap.

How do I get my wife to come home? She has left with my child. I have not been the best husband or father, but I truly feel I have seen the error of my ways.

You are starting out on the right foot — repentance. When we turn from our old ways to consistently walk in a new direction, we are showing a new life. The key is to be consistent, not pushy or demanding. Send kind notes that show your love and concern without manipulative or conditional statements. If she will not receive them, continue anyway.

Your wife is frightened and unsure she can trust your motives. Your patient and consistent genuine expressions will melt a hurt heart.

Pray and seek accountability from strong Christian brothers. Get other men to support you, keep you on the straight path will insure your staying on the right walk.

Finally, realize that even doing all of this will not guarantee your wife's return. Your job is to fight the good fight and to be the example of God's love. As you keep your eyes on the Lord, he will strengthen you in all your ways.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name and address not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.

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Native sons sign articles of belief



Mosley

Smith

Two Mississippians recently signed the Articles of Religious Belief of New Orleans Seminary, and the Baptist Faith and Message statement during a chapel service at the seminary.

Argile A. Smith, a Poplarville native, and Harold R. Mosley, a Cleveland native, signed the two documents as evidence of their adherence to their parameters, and of their having been approved to serve on the New Orleans Seminary faculty.

Smith began his position as assistant professor of preaching in the division of pastoral ministries in January 1993.

Mosley began his position as assistant professor of Old Testament and Hebrew in the division of biblical studies in August 1993.

Cherry Park pastor dies

Hollis Alderman, 60, died of a heart attack Jan. 18 at Methodist Medical Center in Jackson.

The Coila native was a graduate of Mississippi College and Mid America Seminary. He was chaplain for the Sons of Confederate Veterans, and pastor of the Cherry Park Church.

Survivors include his wife Christine; daughter, Debbie Depriest of Clinton; his mother Lottie Alderman of Greenwood; a brother, and a sister.

Adams-Union schedules annual singles conference

Adams-Union Association's annual Single Adult Conference will be held Feb. 11-12 at Parkway Church, Natchez. The theme will be "Coping in Today's World."

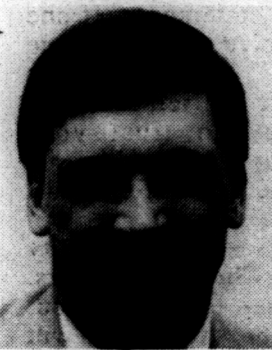
The conference will begin at 6 p.m. Friday with an evening meal; seminars begin at 7. Saturday, the conference will resume with an 8 a.m. breakfast; morning seminars begin at 8:30.

Topics and speakers include: Broken Relationships, by Norris Curry, pastor of Washington Church; Single and Happy, by

Barbara Rozier of First Church, Greenwood; Dealing with your Feelings, Perfectionism, Procrastination, and It's Okay to Be Yourself, led by Dale Little, director of missions for Adams-Union Association.

Cost for the conference is \$8 per person, including fees and meals. Checks should be made to Adams Baptist Single Adults, and mailed to: Adams Baptist Association, 139 D'Evereaux Dr., Natchez, MS 39120. Registration deadline is Feb. 6.

MBMC medical missions conference



John Vess



Hannah Gay



Tree Clemons

Mississippi Baptist Medical Center will sponsor a Medical Mission Conference from 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Feb. 12 in the sub-way auditorium.

John Vess, chaplain at MBMC, will deliver a program entitled, "Call to Christian Service." Speak-

ers who will discuss their mission work abroad include: Tree Clemons (Taiwan), Hannah Gay (Ethiopia), nursing student Laura Williams (Africa), and several Mississippi College nursing students who have worked in Mexico.

Staff Changes

Greg Johnston has been called as pastor of Escatawpa Church, Moss Point, effective Nov. 28. He previously served at Fair River Church, Lincoln Association. Johnston is currently enrolled at New Orleans Seminary.

James Berch has retired from Poplar Springs Church, Hazlehurst. He is available for supply or interim. Berch's address is 754 Georgetown St., Hazlehurst, MS 39083.

Phillipston Church, Leflore Association, has called Lester M. Jeffers as pastor effective Jan. 2. The Arkansas native received his education at University of Arkansas, Central Baptist College, and New Orleans Seminary. His previous place of service was Sunflower Church, Sunflower.

Endville Church, Pontotoc Association, has called Tracy Quilan as pastor effective Jan. 9. He will be ordained Feb. 6, 4 p.m. at Friendship Church, Pontotoc County.

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BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 2

Just for the Record



Diamonds by Design was the theme for the GA and Acteen Recognition Service at First Church, Aberdeen. GAs, pictured, are Deana Clardy, Kristi Andrews, Jennifer Garrett, Kylie Patterson, Rachel Wright, Taylor Stone, Nikki Peugh, Carrie Beddingfield, Jana Bowen, Lacey Bishop, Jamie Ausborn, Vera Patterson, Amanda Garrett, Leanna Pruett, Mary Leigh Tisdale, and Kelly Peugh. The GA leaders are Nancy Hawkins and Barbara Russell. Acteens and their attendants, pictured, are Dana Clardy and Shane Hawkins for completing the Queen with Scepter level; Kayla West and Blakely Stone, attendants. Linda Davis is the leader for Acteens.



Calvary Church, Tupelo, broke ground on Dec. 26 for its new sanctuary and education space. The sanctuary was destroyed by fire on Dec. 21, 1992. The \$4.2 million project will be financed by insurance proceeds and over \$2.6 million pledged by Calvary members and others during a two-week campaign in December

1993. Construction is scheduled for completion by June 1995. Pictured, from left, are Dick Guyton; Henry Whitfield; Piggie Caldwell; John Armistead, pastor; Aubry Hays; J.E. Staub, contractor; Hal Buchanan; Wilson Long, chairman of planning and building committee; Robert Upchurch; and Len Pegues.



Shady Grove Church, Batesville, recently held a note burning ceremony for its fellowship hall. Pictured, from left, are John Stewart, pastor; Wayne Putman, and Jim Bay, deacons.



Pleasant Hill Church, Clarke Association, broke ground for its new Family Life Center. The building will house a fellowship hall, kitchen, gymnasium, and second story. Members of the building committee, pictured, are Doris Keahey; Lyndol Ivey; Billy Ivey; Donna Kennedy; Roger Kennedy, chairman; Jack Pogue; Ralph Boykin; Mark Giles, minister of music and youth; Jimmy Sanders, pastor; and Lawrence Ivy Jr., chairman of deacons.

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Baptist Women of Grace Memorial Church, Tupelo, set a Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal of \$675. The final offering taken was \$2,932.11. Memorial's Sunday School enrollment is 100. Joe Holcomb is pastor.

Focused in Faith — Integrity, Accountability, Effectiveness, Faithfulness is the theme for the 1994 Southern Baptist Business Officers Conference, March 21-23 at the Annuity Board, Dallas.

Workshops will be held Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning. The Monday evening event hosted by the Annuity Board will be at the Texas Stadium Club. Deadline for reservations is Feb. 21.

Mount Pleasant Church (Lincoln), set a Lottie Moon goal of \$850. The church surpassed its goal with a total of \$1,304. Mount Pleasant has 107 enrolled in Sunday School. Anthony Yarbrough is pastor.

*Is there a godless, elitist press?***Former Texas pastor says no conspiracy, only poor journalism**

By Jimmy Allen

My year of study of religion and news media under the auspices of The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center at Vanderbilt University reveals no godless press room in which people are plotting to do religion in.

However, the religious dimension of American life has been ignored as a factor in major stories by decision-makers insensitive to its importance. Our study makes a case for the fact that this is not so much anti-religion as poor journalism.

The amount of personal religious interest in the newsrooms is largely reflective of their communities. Seventy-two percent of editors said religion is important in their lives. Three-fourths of the religion reporters called it very important in their lives. We surveyed a thousand journalists across America in the study.

Journalists admit to being poorly prepared by their training to understand religion. Budget-decision-makers fail to perceive the importance of the religious element in news, despite the fact that more Americans are at religious

services in any given week than are at all sports events combined. One city newspaper has two religion writers (one full-time) and more than 200 sports writers (including stringers.)

Ministers reveal keen awareness of the shift of influence from pulpit to media. Denied by the journalists, this is affirmed by religionists as a fact of our media age. This makes the desire by ministers for the press to promote our perceptions of morality all the more urgent. Failing to do our homework on the nature of the media society, we ministers often want the media to promote instead of report and given news people inadequate opportunity to capture our points of view.

Religion's press-bashing and the news media's religion-baiting are realities of which no one is proud. We discovered a strong need for bridging the gap of communication between leaders of these two communication entities. Occasions for exposure to each other in non-crisis situations need to be created in every community. The common denominator is a commitment to truth-telling.

We need to train our religious leaders to be more aware of the need to know the world in which editors and reporters live. The constraints of their time in produc-

ing stories are unremitting. The highest value of newsrooms at their best is good journalism — getting the story straight. The problem is that every story is incomplete. No one can get it all said in a story. The aim should be to be accurate and fair.

My colleagues in the pulpit would be greatly helped if they could sit in a budget meeting in the newsroom of a major American newspaper. I watched a group of editors deciding the featured news

for the next edition. One story was on a meeting of AIDS-infected persons. Only one of the participants would allow his statements to be identified with his name. He had reached a point of not caring who knew. No one in his family was aware of his condition.

Yet his name gave his story its authenticity. The editor said, "No way. No one's family is going to find out for the first time their son is AIDS-infected by reading it in our paper. Go make sure they

know, or the story doesn't go."

It was impressive to see the sensitivity of these professionals as they dealt with the obvious desire to create a story with impact. Sensitivity and ethical constraints were exercised. The language wasn't religious, but the attitude was. I found common ground.

Allen is former pastor of First Church, San Antonio, Texas, and served as president of SBC Radio-TV Commission.



Allen

North central states host HMB service

OAK BROOK, Ill. (BP) — More than 700 leaders from the seven north central states witnessed a Home Mission Board commissioning service and heard challenges to win their states to Christ in their triennial meeting in Oak Brook, Ill., Jan. 11-13.

They represented five state conventions — Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota-Wisconsin, and Ohio — and one state fellowship — Iowa — and met as part of the 19-year-old North Central States Mission Thrust.

The laymen, church starters, pastors, directors of missions, and state leaders also heard testimonies from their peers and participated in several how-to semi-

nars, but the keynote service of the three-day rally was the commissioning service for 47 newly-appointed home missionaries.

Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis gave the charge to the candidates, citing the parable of the great banquet in Luke 16.

That parable included an invitation — "come, all things are ready and the price has already been paid;" an exhortation — "go to the highways, that's where people gather in great numbers;" and an affirmation to go quickly — "Jesus was talking about the urgency of the day."

The chairman of the North Central States Steering Committee, Wyndell Jones, executive

director in Iowa, told Baptist Press that the first commissioning service ever held in one of the seven north central states was significant for Baptist work in the region.

"I thought it was significantly important to have the commissioning of missionaries in this area," he said, because it gave symbolic evidence that the Home Mission Board acknowledged the area had come of age in its Baptist witness.

Several of the missionaries commissioned in the service either come from the area or have been assigned to missionary positions in one of the seven states, which together account for 25% of the population of the United States.

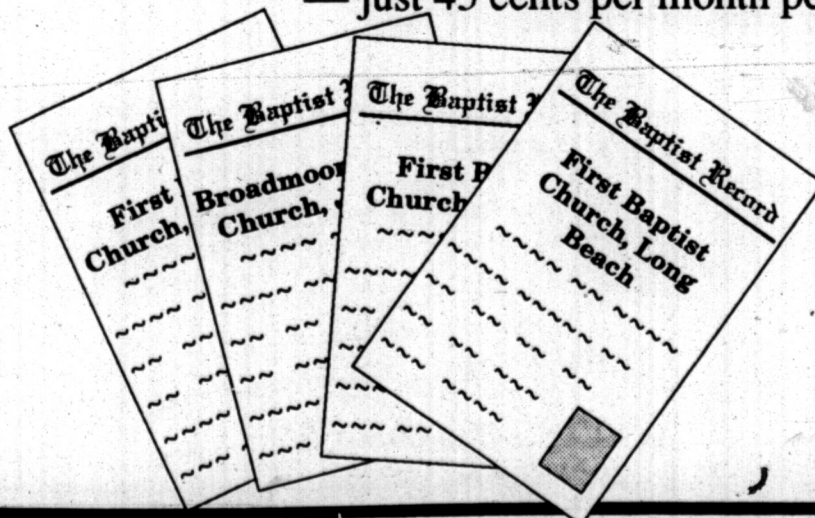
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Uniform Lost and found



By Doug Bain
Luke 15

There are as many legitimate angles of vision for this parable as there are responsible interpreters. Scarcely could there be a field more rich for plowing. This parable in context seems to be a prime example of Jesus going about the business of reimagining the nature of the Father. Many of the Pharisees had imaged God as a tyrant figure demanding purity and perfection above all else. Rather than redefinition, aimed at the rational facility, Jesus does reimagining through parable, aimed at that facility in which occur the deep feeling pictures that control behavior and outlook. He is aiming at the well-spring of behavior, values, and beliefs. God is rather the Waiting Father, not judgmental, condemning, and threatened by ritual contamination by sinners. This deeply moving communication form brings good news to those who have a self-constructed religious system that filters out the light and reflects their own depraved nature.

The demand (vv. 11-12). In these verses, the son basically says, "Old man, you are as good as dead to me. I am not willing to wait until you die to get the goods that will be mine by right of inheritance. Step aside, old man, let youth be on its way to fame and fortune." Nothing to do here but step aside, let him learn, and hope to God he doesn't die in the process. To argue would be to alienate further. The father does not give up on him, but gives him up to his own ways — so he can learn how bankrupt they really are. The wise parent always deals with us redemptively, hoping to draw us to himself.

Folly and famine (vv. 13-16). This young man, anxious to find identity by distancing himself from the parent, took his search for identity to the extreme, ending up on the far side of the universe, about as far from "home" as he could get. But his bid for independence earned this boy bondage instead of freedom. And in the midst of the rubble of his ruined visions of grandeur, what can he see besides his shallowness and shamefulness. But there is still a miracle around, even at the far side of the universe. He does not get down on himself so as to take his own life — nor does he lash out at his low-life false friends. He takes a job, doing about the worst thing one of Jewish stock could do — tending hogs, eating their leftovers.

Awakening (vv. 17-19). Miracle breaks forth yet again. In medical terminology used for emerging from a coma, Luke records that the young man "came to himself." Whatever significance he might have could come only from his father's graciousness, for in his own right he had no status. He had worth, but was definitely unworthy.

Request number two reflects that a whole universe of "education" has occurred since request number one. Instead of "Old man, step aside and give me what is mine and be quick about it," now it is "Dear father, I have blown it all — the family fortune, the family name, the family trust. I am the one as good as dead — unless you can let me simply hire on to serve in your estate. Treatment as a son is beyond all hope." He "came to himself" in the process of returning to the father. Whatever the sequence, return to the Father involves a reconciliation also to oneself, which pulls the fragmented self back into inner harmony instead of inner conflict.

Return and welcome (vv. 20-24). The focus now is back on the father. This wise parent will not let the boy go from rebellious prodigal to the opposite extreme of returning to some fetal position. He must return to sonship. And the point Jesus would make to religious Pharisees is that the Father does not demand the achieving of perfection and purity before the son can step onto the estate. No pharisaic tyrant-God here. He is rather the waiting Father, accepting and forgiving, knowing that reconstructive surgery occurs after return, not before. And Jesus has helped us get an amended version of who the Father really is.

What a picture — not only of who the Father is, but of the one who returns from the farside to the Father. It is Jesus Christ who shows us this Father and who opens to us the way back to the waiting Father. For the one who ever does return home, the price of maturity is costly — a fortune lost, but "kingdom" and "family" gained in the process.

Bain is professor of biblical and related studies, Blue Mountain College.

Bible Book Jesus, the way to new birth



By Dan Howard
John 3

One of the greatest joys I have had as a parent and as a pastor was leading my son through the plan of salvation, hearing him invite Jesus into his heart as Savior, and then having the privilege of baptizing him. In Chapter 3 Nicodemus came to Jesus to find the way to be born again and to gain eternal life.

Jesus explains the new birth to Nicodemus (vv. 1-7). Nicodemus was a Pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin. The Pharisees were the group of Jews who were most interested in following the Law precisely. Religion was a very serious matter to them. The Sanhedrin was a council of 70 elders. It was the highest court among the Jews.

Nicodemus evidently had a great interest in Jesus and his teachings. Nicodemus came to Jesus at night. There are many thoughts as to why he came to see Jesus at night. Some think it was because of fear, embarrassment, or the desire to not be seen. Others think it was because night was when the Law was usually studied and discussed. Others have said that it was possibly the best time to have a leisurely, uninterrupted conversation.

Nicodemus opened the conversation with a compliment. He referred to Jesus as "Rabbi." This was the most honored title in Judaism. By this title he acknowledged that he believed Jesus was a teacher. He also recognized that God was with Jesus because of what he had already accomplished.

The Jews took great pride in being descendants of Abraham. They kept the Law in order to be allowed into the kingdom of God. Jesus stated in verse 3 that they could not see the kingdom without a new birth.

The term "born again" can mean born from above. The phrase "kingdom of God" refers primarily to God's spiritual reign or rule in human lives.

Nicodemus misunderstood Jesus because he assumed Jesus meant a second physical birth (v. 4). Jesus explains that unless a person is "born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Being born of the Spirit makes reference to the spiritual rebirth or regeneration created by the Holy Spirit's work in our lives. Being "born of water" probably refers to one's physical birth.

In verse 6 Jesus distinguishes between being born of flesh and being born of the Spirit. To be born of the flesh is to become a person with natural relationships such as family and society. To be born of the Spirit is to be a spiritual person with spiritual relationships such as being a child of God in the kingdom of God.

The way of salvation (vv. 14-21). Jesus used an incident from Hebrew history to instruct Nicodemus. Jesus reminded him of the time in the wilderness when the people were bitten by snakes. God instructed Moses to attach a brass snake to a pole and lift it up in the camp. Only those who looked upon the snake would be healed from the snake bites. This was a reference to the cross upon which Jesus would be placed. Only those who look upon Jesus and believe in him will be saved and have eternal life.

The word "believe" in verse 15 means more than an intellectual knowledge. It meant a total commitment of a person's life in faith to Jesus. The phrase "eternal life" has more of a reference to quality of life rather than quantity.

John 3:16 is probably the first Bible verse most of us memorized. It has been referred to as the "little gospel." Herschel Hobbs stated, "If all the rest of the Bible except this one verse were lost, it contains enough truth by which all people could be saved."

The reason Jesus came was because God loved the world. Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, was given as a sacrifice for all mankind. The death of Jesus was to pay the penalty of our sin, which we could not pay. Those who ask Jesus into their hearts will receive eternal life.

The primary purpose of Jesus coming into the world was not to bring judgment and condemnation, but to bring salvation and deliverance. The basis of judgment is whether one believes in Jesus and accepts or rejects him.

Verse 19 reminds us that the light of God's love and grace came into the world in Jesus. Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through me" (NASV).

Howard is pastor of Woodville Church, Woodville.

Life and Work How can I say thank you?



By Billie Buckley
Luke 7

It's a smile! It's a thank you! It's a grateful heart! And a grateful heart may be as rare as Superman. Especially is this true of the grateful heart that whispers, "Thank you that I can live today as a forgiven sinner; free to express love to you, Lord, and the others in a world filled with ingratitude and indifference."

How do we keep from being clones in that world? We can find ways to thank the Lord regularly for our freedom of forgiveness.

Gratitude takes appropriate action (vv. 36-38). A sense of direction toward appropriate action is a by-product of gratitude. These appropriate actions result in the bringing of the same two resources brought by the woman in our scripture.

It was her best possession that she brought to Jesus. There was no pretense of false appreciation in this true act of gratitude. Real gratitude takes place only when we bring our best to offer as evidence of a thankful heart.

Her best thoughts produced tears. Our thoughts all produce or result in some action — good or bad on our part. Before the acts of gratitude must come the thoughts of gratitude.

Gratitude has the strength to go first without others' approval (v. 39). This woman's gratitude was strong enough to step out of the mold that continues to create clones who wait on others to move. When you move, not all will be pleased. Gratitude offends those who are stubborn.

Simon didn't approve of the woman's actions. He was offended that Jesus would allow them. Could it be that churches today are filled with Simons — those who don't understand or approve of enthusiasm and praise?

Simon's stubbornness refused to allow this woman the spotlight of the opportunity to take a bow. His lack of gratitude for her actions bound him with cords of his own stubborn self will.

Gratitude communicates (vv. 44-45). Gratitude communicates through love and through courtesy. Is this lost in our fast-moving world where time is our most valuable possession? Are we too busy to be polite and thankful and loving?

A courteous host would have washed Jesus' dusty feet with water. Yet, these tears were one of the greatest acts of courtesy ever performed.

We are told that the woman did not stop kissing Jesus' feet. This act was a result of her love toward Jesus, proving her sincere gratitude for his gift of forgiveness.

Gratitude is on course (vv. 46-47). Being on course may mean that you are on time. Is there someone who has waited for 30 Januaries for you to express your thanks to them? Has God been waiting patiently for you to give him the credit due his name? He still waits for your love and gratitude.

This lady loved much. Loving much is a characteristic of a child. God disapproves when we take this joy out of a child's life. Certainly he approved the much love given by this woman. What word describes your love?

She poured perfume on Jesus' feet. She didn't dab it sparingly on Jesus. She poured it out on him. Her great gratitude was a result of her love for Jesus forgiving her sins.

Gratitude's strong solid foundation (vv. 48-50). This woman's gratitude was right and sincere because it was based on a solid foundation of faith. Her faith produced the peace that resulted in a thankful act.

The basis of our salvation and the reason for our gratitude is that we have been saved from the results of our sins. Have you thanked him for this today?

The result of this faith is the appropriation of peace — not a passive peace but an active, moving peace. This balanced peace results in our forgiving those who have harmed us because we are forgiven.

When you have found this forgiveness, share it with someone. Remember... It's a smile. It's a thank you. It's a grateful forgiven heart!

Buckley is a member of Petal Harvey Church, Petal.

capsules

RECORD JAPANESE CROWDS HEAR BILLY GRAHAM: TOKYO (BP) — Evangelist Billy Graham, a Southern Baptist, spoke to the largest gathering of Christians in the history of Japan as he concluded a Jan. 13-16 Mission 94 crusade in the Tokyo Dome. A crowd of 45,000 people filled the dome Jan. 15. The service was also broadcast to nearly 60 satellite centers across the country. Crowds averaged 31,250 during the four-day crusade; an average of 3,025 came forward at Graham's invitation to make a commitment to Jesus Christ. A 40% response from men — unusual in Japanese culture — was particularly significant, Graham association officials said. Each of the mission meetings was translated into five languages — Korean, Indonesian, Mandarin, Portuguese, and Spanish — via low-power FM transmission. "When this great giant awakens to the love of God and the power of God, I believe we will see Japan as the evangelical tool that will carry the gospel to the world," said Mark Edlund, administrator of the Southern Baptist mission, the largest in Japan.

BIBLE LEAGUE ANNOUNCES MERGER WITH WORLD GOSPEL CRUSADES: SOUTH HOLLAND, ILL. — The Bible League announces today its merger with World Gospel Crusades, effective immediately. Completion of this merger comes after several weeks of negotiations between Bible League President Dennis M. Mulder and World Gospel Crusades President Joe A. Rogers. The Bible League is an international, non-denominational Scripture placement organization based near Chicago, Ill. The League has offices and contacts in more than 90 countries worldwide. In 1993 it placed more than 24 million Scriptures. World Gospel Crusades is based in Upland, Calif. It is known for its "community saturation" programs which focus on distributing Scripture booklets to every individual or family in a particular country. Its current project is Colombia, where it has reached 1,400,000 homes with the gospel. Merged with The Bible League, World Gospel Crusades hopes to reach 7,000,000 Colombian homes.

MONGOLIAN COURT OVERTURNS PART OF LAW LIMITING CHRISTIANS: HONG KONG (BP) — The Mongolian Constitutional Court has overturned parts of a new law that would severely restrict Christian activities in Mongolia, according to Christians present at the Jan. 10 court hearing. In its written decision issued Jan. 12, the court ruled several sections of the law unconstitutional — including restrictions barring Christian work outside church buildings and foreigners spreading their faith — because they violate basic human rights. Reportedly retained, however, are provisions giving Buddhism a chief place in Mongolian religious life, forbidding Christian worship in state-owned buildings and giving the government control of the number of clergy. "Foreigners are free to practice their beliefs and may even be involved in religious activity. To what degree we may evangelize is still not clear." The court decision returns the law to the Mongolian Parliament, which passed it, for review and affirmation or rejection. The religion law alarmed the fledgling Mongolian Christian community, estimated at up to 2,000 members, which began barely three years ago with less than 10 known believers.

CATHOLIC LEADERS SAY NO TO CHURCH'S SOUP KITCHEN: HARTFORD, Conn. (EP) — Concerned that the sight of downtrodden people seeking emergency aid might hurt the image of the host church, Roman Catholic leaders in Hartford, Conn., have told the Franciscan friars who run St. Patrick-St. Anthony Church that they are not to lease space for a soup kitchen. The friars had planned to let two nuns run "The House of Bread" from the church basement at no charge. "We have to be concerned about its function and the image that it projects to people who come there," said Monsignor Charles W. Daly, fiscal officer for the Archdiocese of Hartford. "If they don't like the image they won't come." The archdiocese supports other soup kitchens, but expressed fears that the proposed location of the new outreach would hurt local business development. Daly noted that the long-term solution to poverty is economic growth and job creation.

UNDER DEATH SENTENCE, IRANIAN CHRISTIAN FREED: RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Mehdi Dibaj, an Iranian Christian sentenced to death for converting from Islam (Baptist Record, Jan. 6, page 4), was released Jan. 15, according to reports from Iranian church leaders. Dibaj was expected to be reunited with his family in Tehran, Iran's capital. A statement from church leaders decrying human rights abuses against Dibaj was expected to be circulated soon after his release. Iranian Christians have worked to focus world attention on the plight of Dibaj and other Christians in Iran. Iranian authorities are claiming they never sentenced Dibaj to death and that he committed no crime significant enough to keep him imprisoned, according to reports trickling out after his release. Earlier reports, however, named "apostasy" — or turning from Islam to Christianity — as the reason for his death sentence, originally scheduled for Jan. 12 or afterwards. He has been in a prison in the north-eastern city of Sari, Iran, since 1983 and has been repeatedly tortured. He spent two of those years alone in an unlighted 3-by-3-foot cell. In a trial Dec. 3 he was given a chance to renounce his faith or face death. He answered with a strong affirmation of Jesus Christ, which he held to during several subsequent appeals.

FMB's church growth consultant releases encouraging '93 statistics

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — The Foreign Mission Board has released its 1993 overseas report card, recording new highs in churches, church membership, and baptisms, according to the office of Jim Slack, the board's church growth consultant. Among those highs are:

•**Churches:** The number of churches Southern Baptist missionaries relate to has nearly doubled in six years, increasing from 17,769 in 1987 to 35,188 in 1993. In the last year alone, the number grew by 2,391, a 7.29% increase.

•**Church Membership:** It climbed from 3,450,888 to 3,735,949, an 8.26% increase.

•**Baptisms:** The 262,758 baptisms by overseas Baptists, missionaries, and volunteers was a record for the third straight year.

Baptisms increased by 4.31%, climbing from 251,901 in 1992. That signals the board has broken out of its cycle of radical ups and downs in baptism growth rates.

•**Newly constituted churches:** The emphasis on church growth helped set the record for the number of congregations constituted into churches. Totals rose from 1,606 in 1992 to 2,019 in 1993.

•**Mission and preaching points:** Missionaries, overseas Baptists, and volunteers also helped mission and preaching points increase from 23,889 in 1992 to 25,327 in 1993. This is a 6% growth rate for preaching points, gospel outposts that one day may mature into churches.

•**Bible teaching ministries:** 1993's record total of 2,230,282 people enrolled in Bible classes

now falls under a new title of "Bible Teaching Ministries," not Sunday School. The name change more accurately reflects the various forms of Bible teaching in the world of missions.

This year's report is one of the clearest statistical summaries possible in recent years. In 1991 and 1992, the board posted net church growth rates of 15.8 and 17.4%. These high rates were due, in part, to the historic demise of the Soviet empire, which added blocks of churches to this category, and to the board's own statistical "cleanup" process, which from 1988-92 set in place a standard system to monitor major areas of overseas evangelistic work, Slack said.

•**Overseas mission force:** As overseas figures grew, so did the number of people serving in the largest mission force in the board's 148-year history. The mission force closed out 1993 with 3,954 missionaries, up from 1992 when the total stood at 3,893. The board also appointed a record 495 personnel — 223 career and associate missionaries and 272 two-year personnel. That's a 22.5% increase over 1992 when the board appointed 404.

•**'World A' advances:** Another high point in this year's summary comes from "World A," that part of the world with little or no access to the gospel, often because of religious or governmental restrictions. In 1993, the board sought to reach 85 of the world's 212 least evangelized people groups, which will number 1 million or more people by the year 2000. People groups share the same heritage, culture, belief system, and language.

Also in 1993, mission workers in World A helped establish 37 new churches and baptize 746 people. They also began 237 preaching points and now work with 131 churches with a total membership of 54,553.

"... I was elated to see the continued growth that even surpassed that was reported in '92," said FMB President Jerry Rankin.

Just for seniors —

Fight self-esteem enemies

Following is the sixth in a series of articles on senior adults written by Robert J. Hastings, retired editor of the *Illinois Baptist*, newsjournal of the Illinois Baptist State Association.

Al (not his real name) was leafing through his high school yearbook when he saw himself at 16 playing basketball. "Was I really that agile?" he wondered, thinking of his aging body and the left side of his face, now drawn by a recent stroke. "Am I less a man? What do my friends think when they see me?"

Poor self-esteem is a problem for anyone, but doubly so for seniors. Note these four enemies that gnaw away at our self-esteem:

(1) Like Al, any person who ages is sensitive to wrinkles on his face and neck, of roughened hands, of hair that's thin and greying.

(2) Not having a 9 to 5 job can also damage one's self-esteem. "Since I'm not working, then I'm not worth as much."

(3) Realizing one hasn't achieved all his dreams or reached every goal can make one think less of himself. And when one counts his remaining years, he knows it's unlikely those dreams will ever come true, adding to his depression.

(4) The memory of past mis-

takes, of taking the wrong fork in the road. "If I'd stayed in school, if I'd switched jobs, if I'd been more aggressive." All such "ifs" nibble away at self-esteem.

How can we bolster self-esteem? First, remember what others think about you does not determine your worth as a human being. When I lead family memoir workshops for senior adults, I always begin, "Remember, your story is the most important story in the world, because it's your story!" Likewise, what you think of yourself far outweighs what others think about you. If you can't like yourself, don't expect anyone else to. Each individual holds the key to his or her self-esteem.

So be a little more positive. Stick up for yourself. Credit your successes and close the book on failures. As you can, fill your days with useful activity. Instead of saying, "I'm retired," say, for example, "I was a public school teacher for 27 years, and now I do volunteer tutoring two afternoons a week."

Offer this prayer, quoted by Carroll B. Freeman in *The Senior Adult Years*: "Help us to love ourselves, Lord, so we don't turn each other into trash. You don't make junk, God — why should we?"

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
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CYN QLUM ZLUDD AM BNYCAM U HUS, AC LO
ZLUDD IUAS MLO QLYDO QYNDT, UST DYZO LAZ
YQS ZYED?

HUNX OAILM:MLANMF-ZAW.

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke Six:Thirty-Six.

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